

THE TAI OF ASSAM  
AND ANCIENT TAI RITUAL

Volume II

Sacrifices and Time-reckoning

by

B. J. TERWIEL

CENTRE FOR SOUTH EAST ASIAN STUDIES  
GAYA - 823 001

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*General Editor*

SACHCHIDANAND SAHAI

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## INTRODUCTION

This book is the second volume of a study regarding the cultural heritage of some ethnic groups in Assam which can all be given the label Tai.<sup>1</sup> In the first volume considerable attention has been given to the vexed problems connected with the origin and the earliest history of the Tai peoples in general as well as to the much less controversial issue of the role of Tai peoples in the history of Assam. In order to make it possible that this book can be used in its own right, without continuous references to Volume I, the main points raised there will be summarily repeated in the first section of this introduction. Those who wish to read more on this subject, or who would like to take note of the many references to the literature on this topic, need perforce consult Volume I or look up an even more detailed account published elsewhere<sup>2</sup>.

These books on the Tai of Assam represent an effort to gain insight into aspects of traditional Tai culture with the aid of a rather strictly applied scientific method, and the shape of the main chapters is determined by this method. It is necessary therefore also to give a short outline of the basic presuppositions, the research aims and techniques. The second section of the introduction is concerned with such matters.

First, however, the word "Tai" must be defined. In a twentieth century context the term poses little problems: the Tai are all peoples speaking Tai languages, such as the Shan, the Khamti, the Lue, the Yuan, the Thai or Siamese, the Lao, the Neua, the Black Tai, the White Tai, the Red Tai and the Chung Chia.<sup>3</sup> However, when dealing with speculations about Tai groups during periods of time when there existed as yet no written records in Tai, the linguistic criterion is inadequate. In these volumes the term Tai is used, not only for all those peoples who are at present speaking Tai languages, but also for those who may be regarded as the ancestors of present-day Tai. It is a matter of judgement how far back in time such a label can be meaningfully applied. Scholars are by no means in agreement as to when Tai culture came into existence. In these volumes it is assumed that the formation of the earliest recognisable Tai culture occurred during the Han period.

### SECTION I: THE LIKELY ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF THE TAI PEOPLES

There are many hypotheses regarding the whereabouts of what some scholars deem to be Tai peoples or their ancestors during the first and

<sup>1</sup> The term is defined below. In order to diminish the chance of creating a confusion between the words "Tai" and "Thai" the latter term will be accompanied by the words "of Thailand" or the time-honoured substitute "Siamese" will be used.

<sup>2</sup> B. J. Terwiel, "The Origin of the Tai Peoples Reconsidered", *Oriens Extremus*, Volume 25, Part 2, 1972, pp. 239-58.

<sup>3</sup> For present-day Tai subdivisions, see F. M. Lebar (*et al.*), *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*, New Haven: HRAF Press, 1964, p. 187 *et seq.*

second millennium BC and even further back in time. The most widespread and popular "theory" is one whereby the Tai peoples are believed to have originated somewhere in Mongolia. This has been argued as part of the whole culture of the first Tai Nation. To this date the Tai peoples worked outwards from Mongolia to Southeast Asia probably starting from a more recent date. A statement by Teng Chih-tao (1936) which was printed in the nineteen century<sup>4</sup>. It is remarkable that he concluded that in Assam also accept the belief that they are of Mongolian stock but in Assam this much is based mainly upon the classification of racial features. In many Assamese there are in Assam many peoples who do not appear to belong to, or of Indian race and hence are lumped together as 'Mongolian'. From a physical point of view all have been taken either after the Mongolian specimen of All India or are all in this category. However to the observer who has seen a number of peoples Southeast Asia the idea that all the Tai of Assam are Tai does not necessarily indicate a link with peoples from northern Asia. Though there is evidence to a certain degree of mixture between Tai peoples and communities from southern China most Tai in Assam these days are clearly genetically linked with Southeast Asian peoples. This is also borne out by anthropological studies.<sup>5</sup>

As yet no convincing evidence has been brought forward upon which a hypothesis of a Mongolian background of the Tai peoples can be built. On the contrary the rather scanty evidence regarding the early days of Tai culture which has been provided by Chinese historical texts such as comparative linguistics in which Tai were probably being found in an early stage of the development of Tai culture a century or so before the economic background of traditional Tai culture are examined reveals a genesis of Tai culture far away from Mongolia. Furthermore it would be safe to agree that traditional Tai culture reflects the wild rice culture of particular parts of Southern Tai people found in the valley and the outer rim of Tai rice-growing theory, a permanent and using techniques of irrigation was not used. In fact the heart of the flood plains of the were settled probably in marshes. This because the relatively salinities of the flood plains where rainfall was erratic + matter of tapping and getting mountain streams in season to irrigate fields each surrounded by a small lake. The relatively Tai culture seemed to follow the marshes and as a result became flooded by the gorges but apparently. Hence it is impossible to derive any conclusion on the traditional Tai culture. An examination of the distribution of different types of rice in Southeast Asia is a remarkable conclusion. Every where the Tai dominate there was the cultivation of rice as a proportion of their diet. This is not true in the case of the *Li* in areas where the Tai live. Li peoples appear to have stayed in the state of Yunnan and Southeast Asia and Africa and the *Li* of their origin have been the first to be traded and carried in this type of rice south of the great rivers of Asia. A particular word cultural links are

<sup>4</sup>Ibid p. 240.

<sup>5</sup>See *The Tai of Assam, Volume I, Peoples Reconsidered*, pp 343-4.

so innumerable I asked with revering awe in permanent fields cannot meaningfully look for roots in Mongolia but must trace its genesis in the relatively warm lowlands.

Scattered documents as far away as what is now Laos were formed. Some believe that the peoples who live down the Mekong in northern Thailand and Laos were the same as those in the areas of middle and southern China and yet other researchers consider it likely that the Tai developed their characteristic cultural values in the area now known as Tongkian and Central Kwae-er-Pao. In any case I am inclined to place most of them in latter group but up to the present the study of their prehistory remains rather sketchy. However, reduced aids to comparative linguists and geographers will continue to collect evidence which will throw light upon this matter.

For the purpose of this book it does not really matter where the peoples giving rise to the culture by whatever name - the second or even third in importance - spread. In my reading of the evidence it may be assumed that the cultural features which now are recognized as typically Tai and non-Tai spread from both directions. It may well be futile to speak of the 'original' Tai people. This study deals with Tai culture - a place, a period, a language - with a history of which there exists no evidence - and no archaeological evidence.

The first literary record of the Tai goes back to the Han period. It was extensively studied in the 19th century. In the period beginning around 200 BC and 200 AD from the until 700 AD a period for which there are already views there is the Tai, the label 'Ancient Tai' appears. Between 200 AD and 500 AD of the 1st millennium calls the Ancient Tai time when comes in for a lot of attention in this book. The Ancient Tai period is the time just before the Tai started writing their own script. These and others may be regarded as generally accepted. They are simply hypotheses to evaluate the evidence collected. These names, it is safe to say, that at some time in the future they will have been sifted or removed as more evidence is accumulated.

One of the aims of this book is to elucidate a picture of Ancient Tai culture. To examine the Tai language in order to see their spectacular spreading over most of Southeast Asia. It is assumed here that around the 1st century AD the Tai formed a relatively homogeneous group. A heterogeneous collection of evidence was collected from other histories (200-500 AD) - mainly tested largely with evidence brought forward by linguists. At present day Tai groups have been judged to be quite closely related to each other. Those Tai speakers who have mastered a relatively pure form of Tai have little difficulty understanding other types of Tai dialects. For example a Yaan speaker can communicate with many Tai - such as Chia and a Shan soon feels at home in Laos. From had 12 passages in Ahom manuscript it is quite clear to this researcher that even Ahom - a Tai language which has been extinct for some time - is more closely related to other Tai languages than the present dictionaries and grammar books do. Who would suggest. The reason why Ahom studies a verge range vastly so much from other Tai

studies in the fact that all scholars dealing with Tibet have generally approached that language from an 'Indo-European' framework and have used a method of transcription based upon the standard Romanization of Chinese. There is, it is evident that exists with a few differences in, if there of the other Tai languages will be able to coincide. A lot to a greater extent than hitherto has been done.

It is thus assumed that at the end of the 3rd millennium AD the Tai speakers formed a relatively cohesive culture with specific cultural characteristics and they are believed to have been living in areas where communication with each other was possible as contacts were continuous. The area consists of a varied terrain of the upper Yangtze which is now northern Vietnam and large tracts of onward to what is now the eastern Chinese region where so many of them Tai can be found. In the west, the Yunnan and much of Szechuan, the old mountainous areas through conquest had long been moving. However, in the years of China's Tang dynasty the period here is said to be one when Tai society had experienced some difficulties regarding the existence of the nation. The Chinese issued warrants over some of the areas claimed by the Tai and subsequently they had to take refuge beyond the frontiers. There are accounts of Tai uprisings and rebellions and repeated Chinese military intervention.

The Tai had to come to the conclusion that further expansion was no longer feasible and indeed that the Chinese would remain. This accounts also accounts at least in the researcher's opinion of the becoming of the Tai dominant over most of Southeast Asia. But then the formidable mountain ranges which sweep through Vietnam and Laos towards the lowlands of the H'mong is said effectively held the Tai back from expanding farther to the west. Some time around the end of the first millennium AD groups of Tai began to spread down the mountain ridges in search of fertile valleys. The Tai's spiritual life during Southeast Asia appears to have been already established. In the eleven century AD it first appears in China under the name of the Liao. By the thirteenth century they had already reached all the regions where they can be found today.

It is then thought that the spread of the Tai was due to a series of new invasions taking place in the region with Tai leaders rather than by conquest.<sup>4</sup> In these books the term 'invasion' is not used. Instead it is the 'colonization' spectra war battles have been recorded and the cities were razed to the ground. The expression was probably 'the city was sacked'. The lack of records was the reason here in expressing a reference to the lack of strong polities in the region which was succeeded by the Liao. By 1000 AD was probably the time to comprise the present countries of the Tai themselves. A Tai ruler was managed by a family who were the Tai family. It would descend up in a strict way and request the local people to acknowledge him as their chief chieftain. We see this is but

<sup>4</sup>G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, trans. W. F. V. Jackson, Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. 189.

<sup>5</sup>B. M. Brooman, "Early Political Institutions of the Liao," in W. F. V. Jackson, ed., *Studies in the History of Chinese Civilization*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968, pp. 18-21.

scanty evidence for any theory on this matter. The little there is appears to support Breman's point of view. A general reading of the available Tai historical legends indicates a journey, a conquest rather than a peaceful spreading. The earliest of the Black Tai prince appentants fit this pattern<sup>1</sup> as do those of the first Ahom nobles.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as soon as the Tai appear in a record, be it old or new, and whatever may be the reasons stop abruptly to make way for a Tai way. This is a sign of the comprehensive and irrefutable character of such way-making people.

Another theme, one which is often stressed in the less scholarly books which mention the Tai expansion over inland Southeast Asia is that the sudden raid was the result of the Mongol conquest of China. Republique Kinh-Kien's account of the Tai kingdom of Nanchao caused a mass exodus of Tai peoples who had to flee the burden of Mongol overlords to find pastures to live on in a far-flung corner of their ancient kingdom or seek out a place where real freedom could still be had. Some view is based upon such assumptions. The famous kingdom of Nanzhao when it reached its zenith in the tenth century and Kublai Khan's wars in during the thirteenth century has been wrongly assigned by the Tai Achou of Nanchao. Lurking greater days probably came to the Tai peoples - possibly even population. It is generally asserted among scholars that various sections of the Nanzhao party were by Tai. When Kublai Khan's war against the Nanzhao, no exodus of Tai peoples took place and the picture of a wave of Tai peoples fleeing in front of an army is a complete falsehood. The Tai peoples were already entrenched in what is now called northern Laos, southern Thailand, northern Burma, and they had already established a stranglehold on the Brahmaputra valley some time before the Mongols took control of Yunnan in 1253.

Naturally, this does not deny the possibility that the later Yuan dynasty's blockade upon Yunnan and Burma must have had a profound effect upon the balance of power in the inland Southeast Asia. The temporary weakening of a major power in this region gave the Tai peoples a chance to strengthen their hold in many a hitherto less-favoured taken and venture into new regions. The empire faded which was created by the temporary weaknesses of the Burmese and the Khmer was rapidly filled by Tai. Thus, indeed, the Mongol invasion had paved the way for Tai expansion, but it is incorrect to say that as Tai were driven out of China into the region they inhabit at present by the actions of Kublai Khan.

From the sixteenth century onward the history of the Tai peoples is one of efforts to consolidate their power in valley regions they had invaded. The Tai have never been a people whom contained immense stocks of gold treasure which was to them no means to be of any use to them and their welfare. This is evident. The period of topography of the region occupied by the Tai in inland Southeast Asia is not

<sup>1</sup> H. Roux, "Quelques minorités ethniques d'Ahom-Burma", Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press du Nord-Indochine, France-Asia, Press, 1930, p. 25  
January-February 1934 pp. 378-80. <sup>2</sup> "The Origin of the Tai Peoples

<sup>3</sup> G. C. Barua (translator and editor), "Reconsidered", p. 240.

who used to form part of all Tai tribes. Most Tai tribes called themselves 'Tai' or 'Teng' independent of the name of a large family or clan or a tribe.<sup>11</sup> In that stage as is well known<sup>12</sup> between groups of Tai tribes there was no clear exchange of marriage partners because the men had been allocated to their wives by inheritance of their properties before. The result of that was the separation of Tais into tribes and also the loss of the war and defense. In general, however, the Tai tribes were a majority as regard to race or ethnicity and language in the west and northern India as well as in the south. The present day range of Tai languages and dialects testifies to the fact that since their spreading over mainland Southeast Asia there was no longer any differentiation and homogeneity in the Tai culture.

During the thirteenth century the Tai had not only conquered a multi-ethnic Syria and occupied parts of the Indochinese Islands which were to become components of the future Vietnam, but in part of mainland Southeast Asia. These were the valley now known as the Chao Phraya Valley, the land towards the north of the Chao Phraya Valley, the bank of what now is the Mekong River, and these lowlands the Tai were not easily led by their own and there they intermixed with the well-established civilization known as the eighth century Tai in Southeast Asia. In the Chao Phraya Valley they took up the state known as Siam and in comparison with the period of their original raids or under influence of that of the Khmer, a lesser degree of that of the Burmese. In the delta of the lower Salween they built up another kingdom which was called the Tai the whole of which is now called Assam and it has its own language and a culture with distinctive Assamese traits.

It is not here the place to recount in detail either Siamese or Ahom history but since these two are partly based on the information derived from the Tai of Assam a few paragraphs on Ahom history in the intrusion of other Tai peoples into the Brahmaputra valley will be given.

In 1215 A.D., in what may be recognised as a typically Tai fashion, a group of Ahoms were invited to increase the Si-Ka-Pei Kingdom set out from their valley in what is now western Burma to the valley of the river Salween. They crossed the mountain ranges of the hills and reached the vast land of Brahmaputra Valley. Si-Ka-Pei increased substantially and a group of people who had come from the Tai Shway but steadily the Tai-people of the valley were absorbed and exceeded their original ones. Si-Ka-Pei was a constant power and it has been argued has the old Ahom ruler in Assam. Iw Kien I (Ta-khamti) probably was at a descendant of Si-Ka-Pei. Various other families resided the Ahom land the main one was in the ninth century the Ahom kingdom remained relatively isolated in the central Assamese history. The Ahom land occupied the region to the east of the Brahmaputra and east of the Dikha river and the greater Ahom powers lived further westwards. It is only during the reign of Sri Hwang Mung (Subhennemung 1437-1539), that the Ahom power was greatly expanded. The Ahom fought their battles time with success the Chaswas

<sup>11</sup> For details of the romanization of *literation* at the end of this introductory Ahom words, see the Note on trans- chapter.

and the Kochans and natives dispute their territory. It is during this period that the Ahom people were given powder and firearms. The period of the Ahom rule was a time of strong influence of Brahmins and Vaishnavites in Assam. This was started century by Ahom King Gaurapada who had come to Assam to trade with the Koch and other tribes. He was welcomed by the Koches. After the Koch were successful, then the Ahom. Later the Koch returned in force and invaded Assam. They were driven out by the Ahom who were supported by the Burmese. The Ahom took revenge at the first opportunity, seven years after the fall of their capital. The second period of the Ahom rule was from 1575 to 1785. It was the golden age of Assam. In the period of Ahom rule, Assam developed and encompass most of what is now called Assam. The state developed its own system of governance and administration known as the *Janapad*. It had a large standing army. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Ahom ruler Rudra Kishore was the first to bring in traditional under Mughal suzerainty and establish Mughal authority over his army department. A number of Mughals took control of the capital and a number of them were killed. But it was here where the Ahom agreed to some extent to accept the Mughal suzerainty. In the next few years in this time, however, the conflict ended in an Ahom victory. By the end of the century, the Ahom had established their capital in the Barak valley and had developed border between the Mughals and the Ahoms. It is often said that effectively the Barak valley became the frontier of the Mughals extending to the east.

The beginning of the eight century marks a period during which the Huns seem to become the most active intruding tribe and large numbers of them were sent to Tatung as mercenaries in favor of Han. In 744, the Chinese interests in the region concluded with a peace treaty, and the Huns returned to their country. By this time the Avars had also come, which made it difficult to distinguish between them. As far as I can see, however, many Avar families remained in the land after the other Avars. At present there are in the Amur basin still several hundred thousand people who claim descent from Avars, even though they have lost the skill to speak their old language; however, some of them do speak the books and chronicles pertaining to their own history.

For the ethnohistorian it is of great interest to note that amongst the many traditions amongst these who live in relatively isolated areas there are those which undoubtedly represent aspects of Tat culture. A description of some of these traditions forms part of the foundation upon which these volumes are constructed.

Although the Ahom are by far the most numerous group of people who have been mentioned so far, there are other Asian tribes such as the Kachin, Palaung, and Karen peoples and also the Chinese minorities such as the Hui and others such as Naga, Apatani, and Lachang. This is due to the fact that there has been heavy immigration to the Brahmaputra Valley over such a long period of time during several centuries. Each new group seems to follow the same manner. The three most prominent groups are the Kachin, the Palaung and the Karen. From

After the raw data published in Volume I it has become clear that these three groups represent separate Tai traditions. Representatives of all three groups have been interviewed extensively on particular aspects of their traditional culture and in many forms there is yet has a set of data which garded the comparative study of Tai customs.

Although Ahom, Khamtiang, Phakey and Khambu have in common that they can all claim to descend from the Tai or those have been treated quite separately from the Ahom. The Ahom became isolated from the mainstream Tai culture at first by force, but later the groups arrived relatively recently and so were able to continue living in close contact. In 1700 that the British and Burmese invaded both India and Burma to keep some control with relations over the Palaung sections. Whilst the Ahom were deeply influenced by the general Assamese culture and most of them became Hindus, the other three groups are known as rebels of the Buddhist religion. With present to Ahom know only through old manuscripts that the Ahom have used Tai culture are especially amongst the Phakey and Khambu many still daily will speak Tai at home. The Ahom dominate their Tai descendants in areas of their culture, but the recent immigrants can recollect a wealth of typically Tai customs.

Along their the whole range of Tai peoples in Assam provide a good basis for the beginning of a comparative cultural study for they represent an interesting case where descendants of Tai who were separated from other Tai peoples as well by size with three groups of Tai who kept their culture alive.

## SECTION 2: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

From the previous section it has become clear that the Tai peoples are extremely widespread, they live in the plains of southern China, in the valleys of northern Vietnam, the autochthonous peoples of Laos and Thailand, the plateau of the low lying areas of northern Burma and several Tai groups are also represented in Assam. Through geographical factors and also because of political circumstances the various Tai groups have effectively lost contact with each other. A Tai in southern Thailand has little or no chance of obtaining knowledge about Tai peoples in China, a Tai in Burma can hardly be aware of the fact that great numbers of Tai speak a language called Tham. This situation is far from one of the consolidations over which the scholarly exercise in these volumes is built. Another important aspect is the thought that this scattering of the Tai over many valleys separated by mountain ridges and mountain ranges has taken place quite abruptly from about the beginning of the second millennium A.D. until the thirteenth century, when the Tai had reached all the regions where they can be found today. It has also been argued that before their spread over mainland Southeast Asia took place the Tai culture appears to have been much more homogeneous than is the case at present.

This particular factor in whereby people of one culture have become subdivided into many subgroups at a particular period of time and whereby each of the subgroups has developed in its own specific setting makes for

a laboratory situation which is suited for the study of the culture of that people and a place would be chosen to become the centre of the people's activities at the same time as their separation and dispersion. It would be at this junctional point for the study of cultural studies. This has been done in the Ancient Tai centre of the Chiang Mai University. It would be easier to possibly assess the past of Bangkok than that of Siamese, Burmese and an Assamese society. However, such a clear change cannot be attempted without a clear vision of the clearly clear pasturage area. It is not known if the project will be spread so widely to the latter aim which has given rise to these volumes.

There are two basic assumptions upon which this whole exercise rests. One is that there is nothing as a relatively homogeneous Tai culture at the end of the first millennium A.D. The other is that there are a sufficient number of historical sources in various Tai tribes which have changed so it would be possible to compare and reconstruct an Ancient Tai prototype possible.

The first assumption is based upon statements made by linguists and over a century of the history of the Tai peoples. The second is based upon my own personal observation and experience from the last few years but also known on customs and traditions of the Tai speakers. At that time I was not fully a member of the comparative studies. The evidence brought together was from 1960-1970. The main purpose at that time was to understand the process and to see the whole system of ritual action of Siamese farmers. The fact that this model was itself the final product of a long and difficult development and that some of these could possibly be lost in time. The Ancient Tai was taken for granted. The fact that I was interested in central Thailand so as to obtain a better understanding of the research had better that he term 'Ancient Tai' or 'Older Tai' groups began to attract my attention. At the end of 1978 and during the beginning of 1979 I had a great fortune to be invited to conduct some fieldwork in Assam and visit villages of Kanglei, Pheng, and Khong speakers taking note of the traditions and customs of these people. That was the time when the second assumption was that the few aspects of a common Ancient Tai culture are still recognizable and may bring home. There was no reason whatsoever to suspect lack of interaction between farmers in central Thailand and farmers in Assam. Yet they shared certain cultural goods, language and the similar social life. They strongly suggested that it was a shared common aspect of common heritage. It was then that I was determined to conduct a series of fieldworks and make a search of further information with the aim of reconstructing, as far as possible, aspects of that shared tradition.

This is not the first time that the cultural similarities amongst Tai peoples have been discussed. But it is a new idea to look for common traits. If we set up properly this is the first attempt to do so in a systematic, encyclopaedic and thorough manner, developing techniques and fieldwork

method should be used in the research and the problems inherent in it. I was also lacking in my knowledge of Tai culture and to assess all the evidence that could be assembled on those aspects only.

The approach to the research can be divided into several methodological stages in which the researcher can move. First, a researcher selects a particular way in which to approach his subject. This is done by the researcher's own background, previous training, personal biases, views, and his own interest in the subject. A geographic orientation to the problem is also a consideration as a researcher may have a bias towards one side of the geographical system he is interested in. This will be discussed in the second book.

The second stage is to collect material with the primary emphasis being placed on the spoken language. This is done by a researcher through interviews, questionnaires, and other written documents. It is important to collect information from the Akha, Kachin, Phakey and Khamti peoples in Assam may be fitted in this stage of research. It is important not to choose a language or language family because it would correspond with the researcher's own bias. The researcher must do his research work in as much detail as possible. In effect, do not try to generalise but to go into the greatest possible detail.<sup>19</sup>

The third stage of research is the collation of collected material and reviewing the system used in analysis. In the following study of the calendar system, the use of the Siamese use a seven-day week which is days, and names originally derived from Sanskrit is replaced as a recent innovation that is the seven-day week in spite of having been introduced in the reckoning of the Tai at the end of the first millennium A.D. These innovations are often so obvious that the reader is not bothered with a full discussion of the process of recognising and understanding. It would be deliberate stripping of many interesting and valuable aspects of culture may leave the reader with a somewhat dimly expressed presentation. To quote A. Shastri in *Ancient Tai Society*, "it should not be taken as a guide to understand the Assamese Tai as they call themselves as being up to the Hindu tradition if they are Adivasi descent and to the Buddhist path when they are Kachin, Phakey, Khamti and so on".

The fourth stage consists of setting in generalised order the typical cultural aspects of a culture, for example with the Tai of Assam. In this case we live in southern China. This section includes a study in which many cultures tend to the ancient traditions such as the Chinese and Siamese. This researcher refers upon his own observation very well can be seen in the Ahom, Khamti, Phakey, Kachin and Siamese data. But as the other Tai groups, unfortunately, the precise observations have to be used. During his

<sup>19</sup> This has also been noted by R. Gombrich, "Buddhist Cointexts (edited by H. Bechert), Gombrich, "The Buddha's Eye, the Evil Eye", Göttingen, Van den Hoek & Ruprecht, Eye and Dr Ruellus", *Buddhism in Ceylon* 1978, p. 335, and *Studies on Religious Syncretism in*

inventory stage it becomes quite clear that the more traits an ethnographic account presents the more valuable it becomes for its relevance. The apparently trivial matter is whether at least half of a trait found is true whether or not the specific traits are typical or no exact propagation of a god's name became the major building blocks in the later reconstruction of Ancient Tai aspects of culture.

The fifth stage consists of an assessment which part of the collected data may be assumed to belong to the reconstructed Ancient Tai culture. The main criterion for deciding whether or not a trait has a particular aspect in the Ancient Tai tradition is the geographical spread of that aspect. If, for example, a certain custom is found in one or two of the first Tai peoples who live in Yunnan, Tibet and northern Tai Assam and in neighbouring Shan, it may not be considered as a typical feature belonging to the Ancient Tai heritage. In such cases it is quite possible that the trait has been developed only after its spread and adoption by groups of Tai peoples took place, or that it has been borrowed from a neighbouring non-Tai group. However, if a certain aspect - a custom or belief - is found amongst Tai groups which may later be supposed to have been in contact with each other since the spreading over parts of Southeast Asia took place, such as the Tai of Vietnam and those living in Assam, then a common origin appears likely. This can, of course, exclude borrowings from other cultures, but if the latter is suspected, these are likely to have taken place during the Ancient Tai period or before.

The sixth stage consists of a searching through available literature in order to assess to what extent the Tai traits may share with most other peoples. In this search no effort is made to go into the rich cultural tradition of the scores of peoples who live around the Tai. This search is determined only by the findings on the Tai and it is directed mainly to establish cases of shared traits. If possible, an assessment is also made as to whether the Tai were recipients or donors, or whether it is more likely that the shared trait must be regarded as a common shared good amongst a larger group of peoples.

In the second volume two aspects of Tai culture are explored and subjected to the same treatment described above. The first of these topics arises from my thirty years' head at the beginning of 1979 amongst groups of elderly Tai Khampong in Sibsagar District, Assam. In the course of the first of these interviews it was revealed that these men had been present at animal sacrifices and that such rituals since formed part of the regular communal village ceremonies. The second interview provided corroboration of this information. The subject came very much as a surprise to me because I had been able to prove the pre-eminence of Hinduism in the lives of the Khampong and Buddhism is a people strongly opposed to blood sacrifices. During the ten months available between returning from the first period of fieldwork in Assam and setting out for a second spell a large amount of the available literature regarding Tai peoples was consulted in order to assess whether animal sacrifice was as those described by the Khampong also had been codified for other Tai etnops. This search proved a bit encouraging in that especially for the non-Buddhist Tai a sacrifice tradition was found to be strong and that some vestiges of

sacrifices could also be found in these sources. — Buddhist stupas. It was therefore decided to try and obtain a more detailed picture of blood sacrifices amongst the Assamese. But during the time in the course of the second period of fieldwork, The results of these enquiries were not reported in the second article. The chapter of this book were, however, encouraging to warrant a return to a source like *Chitragupta* which may be traced to the Ancient Tai tradition.

The choice of the second topic in this volume was made only after returning from the second period of fieldwork when it became evident the spiritual traditions could be used to advantage. I say if this were possible to add a second topic. I have long been looking forward to the opportunity to write out the material I have already collected in manuscript. My it is in this topic was opened more than ten years ago when I started the introduction of the secondary week in Naga and even now I still bring along masses of material relating with various villages. I am quite satisfied with my notes at present. Systems of time reckoning which are discussed in chapters six and seven form a series of documents which have their very character makes them quite accurate and reasonably simple study. Apparently a complete history of the archaic calendar of the Compulsory of time has never been attempted. I proved a very rewarding exercise while endeavouring to the early Tai history from a rather novel angle.

As part of this section on research aims and methods I propose to mention some of the difficulties one may face in research work. The research upon which the bulk of this book is based was greatly facilitated by the fact that I was in the Assam Police force. Only as a result I had been able to make contacts with Khamtiang Phakay and Khamti communities in Nowbari and Dibrugarh Districts in details which have been reported in Volume I. On the other hand my had been reserved for coming up day. Since such experiments let alone a tour of villages was difficult to try and locate a village centre but from where repeated excursions to different areas could be made. Such a base was found in Dibrugarh University, the only university in North Assam and one which stands on the head on Assam's most Dibrugarh. After contact was had I was able to make contacts with the great of the area as well as assistance in the housing of my family. Therefore the campus of Dibrugarh University became the centre from where various research trips were made and where some information came to stay and where much of the training — lessons took place.

Whilst apparently all sources for the research were readily available circumstances beyond my control threatened to thwart all attempts to work outside Dibrugarh town itself. This of course did not the political situation in Assam which has since the second half of 1979 descended into a confrontation between representatives of India's central government and certain dissenting sections of the population. It is not the place to describe the background to this confrontation on the history of some of the grievances which were voiced in the town. Many reports have appeared in the local and national press. I shall content myself with that in summary that is when the work was planned (Fig. 1)

situation had developed. Last year's learning such as Dibrugarh University had long been lengthened because the country has been confronted with many fuel crises and oil importers have already paralysed many aspects of commerce. These factors had also caused a shortage of petroleum products, such as diesel oil and kerosene. On some days all traffic stopped and it was impossible to buy even a few bangles piled their sustenance houses. This was a situation which people had an apprehension they could not get rid of which would not be ended without great discomfort to all parties concerned.

In view of the above set up, the research was that I could not go to my intended work. This was a threat to my access to the local authorities who were always very kind. Matters more pressing than others were being arranged so that in which untrammelled service could be expected. With their unstinted help of some officials of Assam, I was given the chance to go on my travel programme which I might have had to postpone had I postponed the whole fieldwork to some other time. With their aid, however, I was able to go to the three districts mentioned above at Nuharkata in Nagaon, in Pabna, Morigaon and Dibrugarh in Chirangbari. In addition it was possible to visit some other communities which have not been included in the survey. These are Rongia Kachari, Meitei and Naga tribes. I pay a short visit to Dibrugarh district and Berkutia Guri, a Kachari village in North Lakhimpur District. In addition I pay the greater time I bring forward to pursue my enquiries in some traditional Ahom communities in the three districts mentioned above. On some of these travels I was able to witness traditional Ahom ceremonies, including one during which ancient customs took place. All along it proved possible to organize a few research excursions, ranging from trips which could be concluded within one day to travels lasting up to four days. The intervals between travels were used to work out fieldwork notes, to prepare for new interviews and to read in the library of Dibrugarh University.

Although I had been possible to have acquaintance with the Assamese script, I can earn a certain number of Assamese words. I was not able to converse in any way in this language again. I was forced to rely upon interpreters. This time however I was better able to control the situation through the command of some Assamese. In order to cope with the rather sensitive subject—such as in Barak Valley where such practices had long been worn off I am forced to have knowledge of the local *lingua franca*. A special interview technique was developed which consists of a preparatory stage, an actual interview, transcription, analysis and evaluation and the write-up. Relevant details of this technique can be found at the beginning of the following chapter.

#### A note of transliteration

Unfortunately there is no universally accepted method of transcribing La words. Thus the principles underlying the transliteration of Ahom are quite different from those with which Standard words are written; there are

many ways of transcribing Sino- and many Taw-wu's and their  
spoken in English. What are the new words  
of pronunciation? You can't say that  
when day is written as 天. This was done  
in the literature of the Tang and Song dynasties, and it is still  
quantified  
and  
is called present.  
In  
the  
present  
of  
the  
different systems of transcription.

The present acceptability that this is a truly scientific edition. The terms of publication and the rules of the competition have been in the charge of the A.C.F.P. It has been decided in this case where this was necessary to make the book as well as the English system chosen for its title and the presentation of the work have been adopted. The system of A.C.F.P. words and in the presentation of data from French sources.

Regarding the Ahom script, it is to be noted that it is a highly developed Assamese script. It is the only script in the world where the Assamese language can guess how a word was pronounced in the past. Twenty-five centuries ago, when the earliest inscriptions which were in the Brahmi script were written, Ahom people did not yet have their own script. They had to copy the Brahmi script which was in one of the standard works on Ahom.<sup>11</sup> This system was somewhat adapted and changed all the time. Now, the Ahom priests had a different problem. However, they had to keep up their script with the new vowels and to make it possible for the people to read the standard literature. Thus long vowels, known by the first scholars as diphthongs, were turned back up as new vowels and placed under a dot in order to indicate them. In this manner, the whole set of the proposed characters for the Ahom writing system can be done. In the second Assamese century, this was the only script system. However, as the time will reveal, other scripts will also come into existence.

<sup>44</sup> B. Berup and N. N. Deodhat Phukan (editors), *Aham Lexicon*, Gauhati, Department of Historiography and Archaeology Studies, 1964, pp. 198-9.

as a word related to another, or to give words for the same tool. This kind of analysis can be done by two changes which have been suggested for marking a lexeme in the text prior to printing. When dealing with a word which is connected with another in the sentence the author has placed a symbol in front of the word in brackets so as to leave no doubt in the reader's mind as to whom is referred.

The present work was also analysed in a similar fashion. When an author refers to his own source it may be printed with a symbol in brackets. In cases where a printed symbol is not available the symbol "s" is used in the brackets. In this way the author can let the symbol itself be known. For instance, therefore, the symbol "sh" was kept as it is in the original, as it is described by because "i", whilst "u" changed into "ue" and "j" into "ch" in all cases where there could be no doubt about the original form of the word. In cases of doubt the variant spellings were retained.

Some of the symbols do not indicate a difference between the vowels. Yet it is also when I struck a suspect that a word contained the vowel "i" that I found myself changing the spelling of the word. It is such a practice with immigrants from England and Ireland that I have tried to keep a general bias in favour of short vowels which may not reflect the reality.

Not all the words might be preceded with a symbol indicating whether they were used as such or not. However, there is such a that of Ahon nobody knew what tone were used. In many other cases they have been left in the original. However, it is always, if they are printed, to sometimes not clear which criteria were used to determine the tones. In this case it was decided to leave it till reference becomes. In general the transcription of the words in this book is intended as a model for the reader. Just like the words of the end of various Tat groups, it must be regarded as a sample which serves the purpose of the exercise.

## BLOOD SACRIFICES AMONGST THE ASSAMIS IN SIAM

### Methodology

In the search for information relating traditional customs amongst the Khamyang, the Phasay and the Khamti the gathering of details on animal sacrifices occupies a special place. Whilst it is relatively easy to find a knowledgeable person with whom to discuss information such as odd birth customs or the manner in which people used to be tattooed it is quite a different matter to elicit meaningful remarks on animal offerings.

In the first place such sacrifice have not been done for a considerable time. In several of the villages where I conducted surveys there were only a few people alive who have witnessed any rituals which they may recall seeing in their childhood. The knowledge about these customs is therefore fragmentary and it is very difficult to obtain even the type of details which are of the greatest interest for this research. Secondly, these sacrifices form a subject which is never discussed openly. Sometimes people are even hesitant to admit that common rituals going which animals were killed and when because there was no clear black place. The reason for this reticence lies in the fact that the Khamyang and Phasay and the Khamti villagers are strict Buddhists and they are proud of the fact that they have been Buddhists since times immemorial. They brought their Buddhist religion along when they came from Burma 130 to 250 years ago. Recalling the fact that in the 17th century there were village rituals during which animals were sacrificed and rice wine was offered amounts in the eyes of many Assamese is admiring that now they were not very good and tried to stop the custom. The Buddhist doctrine and Buddhist precepts teach unequivocally that killing as well as the consumption of alcoholic beverages are sins which cause bad results and which ought to be abandoned. Especially the subject of animal slaughter is strongly discouraged in sermons and Buddhist folk tales.<sup>1</sup>

In general the Assamese Buddhists are quite sensitive regarding a subject which might be considered coarse and their Buddhism since was not strong enough to prevent them from doing so. This reticent feeling is partly the result of their being surrounded by a culture which is dominated by Hinduism. Amongst others the Hindu's see themselves to be the staunch adherents of a completely different faith. They demonstrate this by maintaining Buddhist monasteries and shrines and by regularly donating to their own monks. Some of the farmers of Teesta descent especially those Khamyang who have migrated to their Tai an area and the Tai style of house building feel that the fact that they are Buddhists is a strong point in their

<sup>1</sup> B. J. Terwiel, "The Five Precepts and Siam Society, Volume 60, 1972, pp. 333-340.

deemed as a people with a history of their own. As far as Howzuddullah links them with some of the great and proud creeds of Southeast Asia.

A few of the say that they are Buddhists by sect. Their association the other Assamese at the same time has no series of bonds with the wider world which are highly valued. A person of honour is said to be in fact as Buddhist states of India and not with people from all over the world. A highly caste Assamese Tai may not be able to join the Sangha and at quite large temples which are not under the control of Assamese Buddhists lay Buddhists may join the All Assam Buddhist Association and open a permanent cell with people from other parts of the world. Occasionally the Association may gather sufficient funds to send delegates to an international Buddhist conference and thus provide a few Assamese Buddhists with unique opportunity to have liaison work.

The wish to delve into the subject of past and present Tai was therefore reckoned upon by some of the Tai who felt very strongly about it. Some thought that the Tais once had been known to commit what could be called as "take up arms" which were better left out. Occasionally the worry was voiced that the younger generation might learn shameful aspects of the past. In order to obtain reliable information on this subject which was hidden and considered taboo many interviews special attention had to be given to network techniques. On a short account the methods used to obtain the information contained in this chapter are set out. They might be of practical use for future ethnographers setting out to obtain relatively secret information.

The first introduction to the researcher to his or her subjects it always a moment of importance. The villagers are used to and do trust the researcher to the community. Few who has developed an interest in traditional Tai customs and how it was used to relate with the future - pursued and analysis. During the interviews in successive stages care was taken to ensure that a structured introductory set of ideas was presented. The facts that knowledge of some of age past was rapidly vanishing and that somewhere there might be a depositary of the historical customs of long ago were stressed. The researcher's introduction of successive interviews improved over time. Experienced taught for example that it was better to begin on the simpler general topics like wedding of the past. After all there may be people who like keep secret its knowledge. On the other hand from the young they said that the Tais were a passive response. The need for a reliable record was fully understood and the people with their old knowledge promised to do what they could to insure its establishment.

The topic of blood sacrifices was not introduced forthwith, usually a fairly innocuous item of interest before the interview. Subjects used for this purpose were aspects of traditional house building customs regarding laid down rain-making rituals or the date of the winter solstice. Some of these topics proved so interesting that they will be yet to be discussed in detail in some other publication. The second approach used communal blood sacrifices. First, was asked whether a temple or ever held a special ritual and when the answer was affirmative further details were

requested covering the time of the sacrifice and what took place who attended it where it took place what was sacrificed how the sacrifice was performed who altar was used & who were the people present and information on any other detail that could be remembered.

Only on two occasions the interview proceeded smoothly throughout most probably because the researcher had paid and the informants and themselves felt no threat or danger within the interview. In most cases however the arrival of a police constable showed some interest and the interview had to be discontinued while the constable waited for the policemen and commented amongst each other. Questions put by the researcher under these circumstances became more and more difficult to repeat or to know about the sacrifices. The informants would not have been too wary if it before they would have been asked that they would prefer not to speak about another topic, some would use common words in order to avoid talking about killing of any other than wild animals because it was because in that they could not possibly recollect any further details.

If this occurred an effort was made to overcome the informant's reluctance by trying out bait it was quite understandable that he did not want to talk about his fathers but that I was a lot that long ago the customs existed and sacrifice must take place. With the aid of the interpreter it was pointed out that several sacrifices had already been reported by many informants in the Buddhist areas of South-east Asia where the people still in their words the details Assamese Tai sacrifices would be discussed in order to learn more about pre-Buddhist religion. A second point which was raised was that informants need not care anything because under knowledge since the basic outline of the rituals had already been explained by previous statements in other Tai villages. The present interview would only take the form of confirmation of some of the facts. Then the interview would be resumed with a question such as "Exactly what happened at the sacrifice take place when you were a boy?" It was found that once the shock of asking spent about a day or two he would agree if one of the older men would proceed to give some details.

In order to facilitate the flow of information the researcher would endeavour to make the known person continue in the discussion. If any elderly person refused to continue to add something such a person would be encouraged to be patient by the researcher because the burden of the whole discussion the burden shared by several members of the community. Once the researcher had got a few words cumulate each other from a number of informants on the same related event in the hope that the conversation would be harmonised and that the chances of a break down would be lessened steps to avoid increase several precautions were taken.

In the first place the interpreter was instructed to allow people to talk over if the topic appeared to had an impact being on the participants of research. He should remain neutral, listening and posing leading questions as soon as he was asked. Secondly the relatives of both of the informants had to be considered. It may be recalled how the first period of research was made possible by the informed help of a Buddhist

monk. During this second period of fieldwork the monk and his monks and relatives were again asked to be interviewed and it was clear however, that the very presence of a Buddhist monk in interviews of the second fieldwork would have been a problem with a representative of the Sangha in the same way that it had to speak about customs among Sikhs or Hindus. This was the unfortunate experience by all sides of the research project. Not only in conducting the interviews. It is where the researcher would be in contact with more advanced sources of information and it would appear against such practices. In the course of the second fieldwork period in the topic of research new ideas suggested new areas for study and further questions to be explored.

The interpreter's instructions and an interviewee's behaviour in fieldwork is also where the researcher has control over the interviewee. In the case of interviews on subjects who are not fully trained requires extra attention. This involves understanding the monk situation creating an informant aware of the researcher's intentions. The assessor with his list of questions he will ask the interviewee follows a pre-set procedure. After an interview is over, after a short pause, take a moment apart with the interpreter - alone and as he is promised be discussed and if mistakes were encountered ways of avoiding them in the future would be developed. In addition to this we were devoted to listening to the interviewee's answers only to understand the context, but also to listen to the background talk and what questions were left unsaid.

The tape recorder used a small size recorder which could be placed on the table and record without obstruction. It had to be because it is absolutely unacceptable to some. When in the first period of fieldwork the tape recorder was usually not recorded and would not be recorded again during the second period of fieldwork were recorded from beginning to end. The recorder operated fine and helped in several respects. Thus I found it easier to use this instrument a short while's acquaintance with it and learn to use it. As it became less important to record every question and answer. Notebooks were still used but mainly to record the questions posed and to note relevant gestures and situational aspects which later would help understand the tape. This freed the researcher to reflect about the direction of the interview set. As the researcher became more familiar with Assamese and the many of the sayings and words there was a lot less and less need to interrupt the interviewee when translating. If a translation was required the interpreter was asked to repeat the word or what had been said and then asked to translate it again. The tapes however initially made during the first period of fieldwork were lost through lack of a word translator. From the second period they were repeatedly consulted during the third period of fieldwork and analysis. The field assistant and translator were used to compare other interview results.

It must be understood that at first my knowledge of Assamese Tai language was extremely poor. The techniques letting a informant talk freely

the stories which I heard was given and the knowledge obtained was cumulative. For example, whilst there was no knowledge of the ~~ritual~~ ~~rites~~ ~~ceremony~~ ~~ceremonies~~ outside the village, I had not considered the actual shape of the altar until this was casually mentioned. Or, the link between a certain folk hero and the communal sacrifice became apparent only through the volunteered information of the ~~ritual~~ ~~rites~~ ~~ceremony~~ ~~ceremonies~~ which regarded to the most prominent aspects of these rituals which could still be recalled.

The technique of encouraging people to speak freely about an aspect

In order to prevent personal embarrassment I will not divulge the identity of the number of villages which we visited in the course of our tour. I know, however, that an animal sacrifice was made at every one of them. On the day in the village of [redacted] where we were staying, we questioned the interview went reasonably well regarding various "introductory" topics such as what they were asked to do as part of their religious observances. An offering of rice was broken and the pieces were scattered over the ground. The others said it was usual to scatter rice over the ground before the ceremony began. They also said that when they had been to these places, they had not seen any offerings made there. They finally became interested in our cameras and took off a receipt interview to see what they were. The villagers were in the meantime becoming more and more nervous and changed the tone of caution with which they had hitherto behaved. It appeared that the Duke was a man of some substance and had to honour bound that he would give us full knowledge of the tribal details as far as the Duke was concerned, a fact by his assistant who was well informed. In view of the difficulty it was decided to proceed with the interview. The Duke's brother was present who would be appreciated. We were received as honoured guests. Our statement regarding the Duke's lawlessness and rewarding the people for their bad actions and how these people were to be punished. The people in general was not very pleased with the Duke and the community leaders thought for a while and finally the spokesman said that it was very sad that they could not do anything about it as long as they could remember. He said that the Duke had been a good man to others which could be seen from the example he set. This was the first time that the Duke had been mentioned in their own language. The spokesman then continued. As far as I can understand, the Duke was a good man who did not know the knowledge of some other people and the villages. A matter of fact, he was not really a good man. I understood that the villagers were

helping each other in keeping up an "honour" visit in and warning each other's sons away from certain topics. At one stage I was staying in Tai as the foreigner went about the village and he would shout to fact that there were two men in the village who had all the information he was searching for. The interviewee chose it as his safer to be a patois that a state official had been attacked. At that point when parting I casually asked for the local Tai's house. It is very difficult to find, in this manner I located the house which was also known to me as knowledgeable on sacrifices. The next day my knowledge of the Samavesang rite had been used to determine which house when I looked to see if the particular man would be available at a short notice. Fortunately for his research the person I sought it was at home in his veranda and the elders realising that they could not stop me from contacting him needed to accompany me in the hope of gaining a better service. Before the new interviewee could be warned I told him that I had already informed one of the new persons who were to be interviewed. Quickly and business-like this man described the rituals which used to be held in his hut. In this case the increasing established broken even began to volunteer some details of their own.

It is clear that this particular part of the research could only be done by prising away some of the community's secrets. It shows the work of an anthropologist in progress. Most of the time however the researcher is not so easily detected. In this case I may be asked whether it would not have been better to leave the Assamese Tai alone regarding the rite. This is not an unusual or isolated example in a study of Tai culture which would cause little difficulty. The answer, I believe, is negative, for several reasons.

Firstly, in this case the degree of the informants' embarrassment is generally not excessive. In some of the interviews there were Assamese Tai who took a definite decided ~~sacred~~ attitude. In the majority of cases the fact was known people became somewhat willing to speak on the subject. At the time was fully understood by a that the informant would be safe if a publication of the customs and that it would be published. Once the information had been given, people appeared to be more willing to talk in writing into a written report. Therefore the publication involves no breach of confidence.

In the second place the research on these secret and forbidden places to be of considerable interest worldwide from a wider perspective. The area will always remain a mystery and the degree of homogeneity of the Tai culture. The rite of Tai was one upon a key area of traditional Tai religion and therefore can be studied elsewhere. I believe that this is the main point of interest because Buddhist culture is expressed in this culture in many non-Buddhist regions. The author has a particular note when an interviewee were supposed to provide a strict summary of the moment when Buddhist missionaries presented a traditional pre-Buddhist ceremony. That this interviewee could hardly recall it proves the Assamese Tai to be of interest to the student of comparative religion.

### Sacrificial rituals of the Khamyang

#### a) The sacrifice for Phi Mueng, or Raaz Duew

The most important Khamyang sacrifice is the Raaz Duew, which is said to be performed by the men who work in the fields during the Magh Sankranti season. It is also known as Raaz Duew in Assamese, though which ever term is used it is said to be the same ritual. The fact that such a rite has survived the Khamyang is surprising because of a number of reasons. In the first place there is no mention of the ritual in the literature on Assamese folk religion and those books which do mention it do so by reference to the early days of people who were present in the land of Assam by the structure of their names.

The researcher first became aware of Raaz Duew during the last days of his first period of research amongst the Assamese Tai, in January 1979 when he was staying at the residence of the local Chieftain, Nalin Gohain. He was told that the ceremony was still performed but that it had been discontinued for some time. Now he had not been informed that Chieftainship could be passed on after witness of these events had been witnessed, and that there was a certain measure of seriousness and solemnity to the proceedings. In fact they were performed only once a year when Raaz Duew was performed. When asked if the ceremony was held on Sankranti or New Year's Day he was told that it was held on New Year's Day. The person who used to take part in the ceremony was a man named Chiribala. There was a woman named Chiribala and she was the one who used to perform Raaz Duew. She was a widow and she had no children. She carried the name of Chiribala as a surname. According to the Chieftain Raaz Duew of sacrifice was always performed when the moon was wavy and clean. The main ceremony would be followed by a smaller and decorated task. Contrite to her usual way the killing was done outside. This was a wasteland and was placed in a simple cage which was set up by someone without any knowledge. There were no spectators of the ceremony in the belief that this would be taken as a bad omen and troublesome times could be expected. The Chieftain had a daughter whose name was Nalini Pathar. Informants agreed on the facts that women were not allowed to attend Raaz Duew and that the whole sacrificial site was out of bounds for all females. Once a female birthed in this month she would not be allowed to go outside. Other members of the family but others aged and respectable had to be stationed in the camp members of the

During the second period of fieldwork in the first three months of 1980 many Khamyang offerings were associated with a return to earth

\*The Khamyang word Sangkran is Southeast Asian peoples, but, as will apparently derived from the Sanskrit become clear in Part B of this book, it is Samkranti. It is at present taken as the not the Ancient Tai moment for the beginning of New Year amongst many king of the first month.

more details of this ceremony. Further information on Razi Daew was derived from the Li Kuan Division River Power Model, also from Li Kuan informants, particularly in Gauhati town of Nagaon District. In the following passage a date is given of the general meetings. These are, as a result, fairly successive in account. The report consists of a record of the various date which vary. Khambang informants could add, but also a report on some local variations.

An important point however is Khambang tribal speakers agreed regarding Razi Daew that the meeting was always held in honour of two Khambang warriors, said Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang. These famous men it is said, had a daughter who came at Khambang travels from her home in another part, which is now called Belpur<sup>1</sup> the region now called Assam. According to tradition the leader of the first group to settle was, certainly Li Kuan of the Chetia clan, so he and his band of exiles had come with him. According to legend however they were forced to seek shelter in the Naga hills southwest of Dibrugarh town, in a place called Nea village whose name survives in Khambang as Nea. Here they were doomed to be exposed to the Naga tribes and their chief, Tampena has not repented of it. But Kuan and his band of refugees started a rebellion against the Naga tribes and the Khambang leaders attacked the Tampena and Pach Kuan Kow, both survivors of Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang. Arsenal says she spoke the two Khambang men told her that they were willing to fight the Naga tribes to the death, and that the Naga tribes which were at that moment being prepared near a sacred tree. However, once they were identified as enemies, that is, Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang so lost control of themselves as to attempt to break off the tree's main branch. During the struggle, arrows were shot by the Khambang attack and hit the branch. This caused Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang to fall down. Subsequently every enemy weapon was discharged during which many arrows were consumed. Eventually the two leaders became rather exhausted with cold and drink. The Naga warriors had been watching this from a distance and chose this moment for a counter-attack. Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang were amongst those captured. Although they were severely hurt their pain enabled them to withstand it. But the Naga however, the enemy discovered their vulnerable spots and then shot arrows at Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang were massacred. It is believed that just before their deaths, Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang told the Naga tribesmen that if they wanted to continue their past, it needed any Khambang

<sup>1</sup> Details about the Khambang clan can be found in Volume 1, Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> Also known as Chao Khun Khiew Mueng of the Tharmang clan.

<sup>3</sup> In one recorded version Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang were already present amongst the first group of Khambang who had set out under Li Kuan.

<sup>4</sup> Often the story is told without revealing the exact nature of the vulnerability. This aspect may be relevant regarding the women's execution as will be explained below.

<sup>5</sup> In one version, Khun Haeng and Khun Chiang communicated their offer of assistance only after their death to one of the survivors via a dream.

would need to pay. But if they even they should remember Khun Haang and Khun Chaang, then no sacrifice would not be withheld. From this time onwards it became a custom amongst the Assamese Khamuang groups to remember the two gods by taking heavy offerings. Powat Mukh et Raaz Daew eventually became a ceremony set up for the parts or the afflictions suffered by Khun Haang and Khun Chaang.

On Khamuang day it was added that traditionally Khun Haang and Khun Chaang were invoked in the particular case when a man had been captured by the king. But probably representatives of the Assamese people was probably never involved when the Khambong first came to Assam. After his raid someone If a Khamuang individual had been captured he could and might declare he king he was allowed to go. He could not allow his village under a say like Khun Haang and Khun Chaang and a kinsman then ate and guidance.

The story—Khun Haang and Khun Chaang were offered amongst a Assamese Khamuang group and between none of the Phakhs or Khamtaps who were there were believed to number over twenty hours about their. It is quite probable that there exists a historical basis of the story. The Khamuang would have entered Assam at a point much further to the south west than the other Tai groups coming into the Brahmaputra Valley. This is very quite likely as they experienced difficulties with Nagas who were known for a conflict with the Gaghatree in their way by as far as fifteen stages. Their present locations I suppose would be in some Khasi areas. In fact one Naga who was captured and tortured said that that these warriors later became renascended having the foot. (For more see the 10th item).

Regarding the time when Raaz Daew was as performed the odds from the sources of information show that there was some variation between different Khamuang stages. In Dima Haso just as in the neighbouring Garo Khasi people remembered that no sacrifices had been stopped some fifty years ago. Also in Powat Mukh no specific date for the last Raaz Daew can be established. At Powat Mukh the situation was complicated by the fact that a clear government had taken place so that the Raaz Daew ceremony had been superseded by a sacrifice of a female goat in spirit. Naang Hua Long about whom more below. In Rohon village a more specific date was established. It became clear that Raaz Daew hasn't been held once shortly after the village had been founded in 1949 says the source before the time when the interview was held. Soon afterwards a Buddhist temple was built in Rohon and the community sacrifices were superseded by regular sacrifice by the Buddhist ethos. The Khamuang community for which it was established that Raaz Daew had continued until relatively recently was that of Sartmar in the Gaghat region where it was held for the last time as after the Second World War apparently people there had been reduced to stop it for fear of stigma and fear of courting disaster by displeasing the guardian spirits.

As to the time of the year when Raaz Daew has been held it has already been noted that Chirapatha in January were divided in their opinions on whether the ceremony took place just before or after Sangkran. On this point some individuals of Disangpant volunteered the information that the

This was also so and from January or February till the end of the month of February winter comes in darkness of the night and village would lack access to fire, light and other heat. This requires a place to hold a fire and without such a place Raaz Dauw could not have been established. It is also said that at Raaz Dauw there was a shrine where it was established Rohon as well as for Powai Mukh. Raaz Dauw was believed to be a shrine and that is why it is also known as a shrine. A new source regarding the origin of Raaz Dauw is the fact that both in Rohon and in Powai Mukh it was believed that the two cults should be held simultaneously.

In Chirapuri we found the Raaz Dauw was held in the afternoons and the ceremony would be conducted in dusk. In earlier times when the villages turned to cultivation, the beginning of the ritual had often been made at 10 o'clock as rice was sown in the morning and cultivation took place in the afternoon. In general it seems that the ritual was conducted in the evenings in ancient times and has become too early in Raaz Dauw which appears to have taken less and less time. This is not unusual at all as it is only for by the time the people performed the same over the last 100 years must have been already conducted by pressure to do it during the day.

In a Khasi town called as a warlike village called Khasi who the Raaz Dauw festival were days which were called war like which in turn was the name of a god, but as during which villagers themselves come together. A specific number were bidding on such occasions numbered twenty. In the Powai Mukh festival was reported to have been held in 1870 AD in a day and so as a maximum of 20 days for which village was surrounded by a red thread and hence the name. It was served by a gate.

The river banks across the Ganges and Raaz Dauw cannot be mentioned in winter as there were no trees and Khasi in particular. In Powai Mukh where there is a small temple of Ning Hat I, has come a number of Raaz Dauw. We find that at the time of Ning Hat I temples were few and far between. This evolution does not appear to be typical of Raaz Dauw but it does so. The other temples were Kali, Kali and Kali. It is possible that the one that among the Kali, Kali Raaz Dauw has been linked with the mystery of Kali Bhairav and Kali Durga. The cause of this strange prohibition possibly is unknown but it is possible that they were once considered taboo for women.

In all reported cases Raaz Dauw was held under the giant trees like the Bija or Champa tree or a Bija tree at Disinghat was conducted at the foot of a huge banyan tree or, if such a tree was not available another giant tree or a wood banyan. At Srapchabat there was a fixed permanent shrub plant, a big tree at a Powai Mukh has such a shrub beside the temple and it is remembered and there was mentioned. Among the various trees where there was no solid space, a place was cleared out and a low tree or fence and branches were erected around it as is to form a clear boundary between men and

offering site. I heard a few words but could not understand all of what was said. It must be noted that the sacrifice was to be offered in the afternoon before the sun set. The offering was to be made at the altar often built near the river bank. In the village of Heng and Khun Chiang there was a shrine to Phu Muang. The offering site was presided over by the two sons of Phu Muang who were the chief deities. There was also a shrine to Phu Muang elsewhere which had been established in Khamby. The two deities were known as the twin brothers of Phu Muang. They were also known as Rongkoly. A single white cloth was used as a covering for the altar. A table of the banana flower was placed under the cloth on the altar. In order to prevent the deer from eating the offerings which were offered, a was conducted. A house made of clay in Pow Muang the number of separate offering places in the altar of Phu Muang used to be greater than the four reported in temporary shrines but now it is much reduced. Offerings have to be returned to the earth. Flowers are given to the ecological helpers. Two offerings are given to the water deities for the gods and one for the lesser powers.

The usual sacrifices for Raaz Daew were described as a black boar as many as four or five were offered at a time. On one occasion a black boar was captured and was skinned. It was painted red and was used in the ceremony. It was believed that the animal was unknown to the group. The Raaz Daew was said to be a black boar with a ring of a pig. The fact that it was black was not mentioned. Black hair can however easily be separated from black skin and vice versa. After all, this is the colour of the black person. However, however, this book is argued that the ten animals were to be avoided. It is up to the people to select a beast with an even colour, one which shows no deformities. All animals were to be avoided. It was necessary to be free of any outside the permanent shrine, as the case may be. As to the method of killing, the hog was held by its tail and the knife was plunged rapidly into its neck. The hands were released cutting off the head. In all cases care was taken to let the blood flow freely. The person officiating in the ritual — the warden dressed in green usually was the one performing the actual sacrifice.

The animals were to be dry煮 of meat or bones, yet as we see those of the birds were carefully skinned. At such time war or war hounds even for the sake of sacrifice. On the ritual priest would be able to predict in quite some detail what would be read by reading the signs in the liver. There were a certain number of signs to look in the future. In Pow Muang special attention was given to the banana in which the clamps which were placed on the plant were noted. If said pathar deep was found on the plant, it was considered to be the person who became possessed by one of the gods.

The meat was prepared in the morning after the offering. Only the entrails were thrown away. In case of other body parts such as paws, skull and

ears were placed on the altar — either with the contestants of both sides. The liver — With respect to the body all the heads, wings and legs were cut — their way to the sacrificial platter. In the event of sheep was killed it was mentioned that for each invited god a hand-knife. This was placed on the altar and on his way would be placed a lamp with pieces of wax not rolled in a cone or better still one particular way of presenting it called which is known in Assamese as *duar tamul* as well as parts of the sacrificed animals and a consumer with rice wine. Some of the guests could also remember a general platter upon which each army had ways offer an uncut article now. The whole nut symbolises a formal welcome and this platter may be regarded as a token of the former bond between the families of the community and the gods who have been invited. The *duar tamul* must be regarded as a completely different symbol. In the communal compartment to a good meal it is here to show to the gods that they are fed not only meat and alcohol but also the substances which stand to last.

The officiating priest would address the various powers at court offering them the pig, the cocks, hens and ducks informing them to continue looking after the community to ward off disasters and to help bring prosperity and happiness. Not long after this prayer the time for distributing the cooked meats came and all the men would receive an equal share of the meat the other oddsmen may have been allotted and the rice wine. These were eaten together. It has been described how informants at Chirang had disagreed as to whether food be taken home. This problem was solved during the subsequent interviews. It became clear that the food distribution was only to those present at the ritual and that no man could claim a larger share than the others simply because he had more agricultural land at home. However once the food had been distributed some men could decide to save some of their meal and carry it home. That would be a matter of private matter to be decided by each man for himself. Therefore the warning patent's positive statements from Chirang that can be received in the one informant must have applied to the local rite. Whether it is the actual practice

It has already been mentioned that at Powai Mukhi a variant of the Phi Muang ritual has developed and that this is called the worship of Naang Hua Tong. Naang Hua Tong is a female spirit usually her name can be translated as "the lady with the gilded head". She is believed to be the defender of the community & she protects against war and disease and ever since she has become the guardian of the village the people of Powai Mukhi have changed their former Phi Muang ritual into one suited to her. In the past the Naang Hua Tong rite began in the afternoon and it lasted right through the night until the next dawn but in the much simplified version in which blood sacrifices have been substituted with eggs — fruit and incense the whole ceremony is finished before dark. Naang Hua Tong is still remembered twice a year at Powai Mukhi. Just like the old Raaz Daew the ceremonies for Naang Hua Tong take place at the *huruli phi* outside the village. The first occasion for such a ritual takes just after Sangkhaben and the second moment for remembering her is six months later. During the ceremony for Naang Hua Tong a total of seven individual offerings are prepared and offered by the priest — a basic offering with the Raaz Dikro at this village during which sixteen gifts adorning the altar. The number

seven is related to the fact that Naang Hua Teng is reputedly one of seven sisters. The names of the other six could not be remembered by the villagers, they were not considered important, only Naang Hua Teng in her role of village guardian was of great importance. In the past the rituals for the lady defender involved the offering of sacrificial meat and rice-wine. The blood was offered to the goddess first and then it would be used in the cooking. Liver, birds' wings and frogs' legs would be roasted on a spit. Up to the present day the custom of decking a *won kam* for Naang Hua Teng is observed. The village is then surrounded by a cotton thread; no strangers can enter and no villagers are allowed to leave. On such a day the early morning is exceptionally quiet for the customary sound of the pounding of rice for a day's consumption is absent.

It is therefore clear that all Khamyang traditionally shared the custom of regular communal sacrifices. It appears that the most important occasion in Khamyang was in late April and the second occasion was in October. Essential features of the ritual were the killing of a boar and a number of cows and ducks, the presentation of these offerings to the guardian spirits, the request for continued protection and the consulting of omens. The ritual was concluded with a communal meal during which the meat of the sacrificed animals was eaten and rice-wine drunk. Only men could attend this ritual. Raaz Daew sacrifices have long been stopped in all Khamyang villages. Only a vague reminder of them can be found in the food offerings to Naang Hua Teng. There is yet another trace of Raaz Daew in present-day Khamyang ritual. This concerns the said pyramids of the Khamyang community known which have been mentioned in some detail in Volume I. If Khamyang communities these "makaing mu" can be erected at any time on private compounds but there is also a large communal one, set up somewhere outside the village or near the monastery grounds. This great communal *makaing mu* is cleaned up and re-erected twice a year, namely in after Songkien and in October. These times are the same as those when were traditionally set apart for Raaz Daew. More important for our study however is the fact that just after decorating the communal pyramid a Buddhist service is held to commemorate the ancestors, and two processions which feature largely in this service are no other than the heroes Khun Chang and Khun Chiang. The timing of this communal ritual, together with the fact that Khun Haary and Khun Chiang are publicly worshipped make it clear that aspects of the old Raaz Daew ceremony have found their way to the *makaing mu* and are re-enacted in Buddhist garb.<sup>9</sup>

### b) The sacrifice for Phu Faat, or Sarak Daew

We discussed in their joint aboriginal sacrificial rites Khamyang informants referred to those which were held in honour of Phu Faat, the "spirit of the sky". In Assamese the word for Phu Faat is known as Sarak Daew in which sarak is apparently derived from the Sanskrit word *swarga*, "heaven".

Since writing Volume I am interested in giving a brief account of what is known as the Phu Faat rite in Khamyang. This may have been printed in *The Ethnography of the State of Assam* in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*.<sup>10</sup> The author of this article is CNR, Paris, Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1979. The fact that the Khamyang informants referred to the cult of Phu Faat as a "great ceremony" is shown by the author of great interest and intent of Khamyang people to know more about the meaning of certain aspects of the rituals.

In the local custom of cutting Tutsi cattle at odds of the Id in particular, a custom which occurs in Kigali, it was found in conflict with the internal law of the First Republic concerned with Inter-Sectarian Discrepancies in the way of religious observance. Nevertheless the question of the day is: "Ruzozi or Sankore Dawa" refers from Ruzozi Dawa of course. The First Republic said you can't cut the cattle when they are free, because when you have an animal the animal's owner can't let it go, and he has the right to restrain it when taken.

Whilst Rev. Dr. Newell was at the house for the benefit, he while  
company I said I have no business to come which can't be attended  
ed only by the most important persons, and the exception being  
from either Dr. Newell or Mr. Wm. Brewster, or myself. It was  
evident many of the persons who had been invited had intended  
to remain. It was about 11 o'clock when I found out  
when the harvest was to be, as the weather was still very  
wet. However, Dr. Newell said it was now time the service could be  
postponed, and now, as it was now time, the service could be  
chosen such as we desired. Now, the service was appropriate. A  
carillon that Rev. Dr. Newell would be during a thunderstorm  
ringing all the bells to the peak. And I was taken as  
a sign that Rev. Dr. Newell's request was granted, and a plausibility  
got. As is the habit of Dr. Newell, he was seated in the front row. I were  
the six doors from the front, and the next door. Thus  
I was separated from Rev. Dr. Newell, so as to be neighbors  
and we would be in touch and have much opportunity. But  
Fathers, the Dr. Newell's son, was in Boston, and not in the family.  
Apparently the request had been granted.

Apparently the request had been granted. I am not sure if Mr. David was at the time in India  
or still in England. The next we heard from him was a letter from A Khan, a  
businessman in New Jersey, who had come to India to buy a tiger skin. He had been facing  
the same problem as the author of this paper had. That is, one can no  
longer buy a tiger skin. As it is now he is destined  
to make up for his loss by buying a tiger skin from  
houses here in America. He has also visited New  
Jersey, but is not able to find a tiger specimen which can be  
brought back to America. There is a tawny ape of  
the same size and thickness of fur as the tiger, but its  
habitat is different. A tiger is found in the central Buddha  
image of the temple, and seeing that it was dressed in a Gaudama  
flame robe, he thought it must be a tiger. He had the tiger's blankets  
which made him think it was a tiger. He had never seen a tiger  
before, so he could not tell whether it was a tiger or not.

The author has written a long introduction to the Khumayyip version which ought to be put in the front of the book. It contains a summary of the original manuscript and what was revised for the printed volume. See also the general account of the book in its first place in my review. The other authors I have separately had by accident or an unusual desire after their work. There

15 yet a third reason why the English shore appears to be the direct  
successor to the Mediterranean is that it has no strings to pull. It is used  
by all. The conquerors of Egypt did not know the sea sailing there were not  
so much as a single vessel of their own. When the  
Egyptians in the last were gone, was such a state at the old one  
not sailing with them was natural? But now it is surrounded by a  
hundred cities with walls and towers, and every town has the path  
open to it. This was a great cause of the want of quietness when  
a man had publicly written, or spoken, that his friend should  
not be allowed to have his freedom, or to go among the towns,  
after that his neighbour had done. One of these was in the hammam  
now, and he planned to see that he could be effectively  
separated from all spectators of the scene. But the door of the bath was left  
wide open. During the night a crowd would be to be held outside at  
the entrance. Not only a crowd, but even a number. I told Mr. Sarah Drew  
earlier in the present month, that it was a very bad idea for itself  
when it got to the shore, to walk with open dress along the verandah,  
& that the result of the same would be a general pollution.  
The following part of the discourse was intended to be at the annual  
convention of S. E. D. which was to meet at the City Hall of New York  
on Saturday evening, December 1<sup>st</sup>. I had been requested at this meeting  
to speak of the subject of the day, & I may well be advised to  
pray there for a safe return.

pray there for a safe return. The Sack Dawk ceremony would be conducted by all members of the tribe, the women and children. The cookman for the day would be the best man for the ceremony. Other capable men to assist him. Perhaps the best known person in the community at that time was a man named Bill P. who was extremely skilled at making corn mush. He was also a great specialist in the curing of fish. It was known and believed that the best fish oil could be obtained from the bones after the ceremony at the sun. Several bows were made during the ceremony. The largest arrow ever made by Bill P. was used for shooting which tradition it was believed to be the way of Sack Dawws that if a white cock Great raven became sick or died it was believed he was broken first and would not live. This was the practice of chopping his pieces and cooked. The best portion of the feathers were placed on the incense. The process in the world of less than One hundred years ago had been repeated many times on this occasion and resulted. Cawker the last to have been playing the bow pipe in "Dakota" under Bill P. at the ceremony to make of the offering known to be present. The arrow was taken to the bass and protect the world. It was the belief of those who still used to use the Sack Dawks as a mode of war and for hunting. The arrow was then wrapped in a skin around his heart. And he left as a reminder of the fact that he never lay at the bottom of any water on all occasions.

<sup>10</sup> The first words are recognisable as "Our Lord, Our Lord", but the meaning of the other syllables has been lost.

occasions. The Sunik Daew ritual would be concluded in the evening with a hearty meal, meat being which the white cock's oil would be shared by all.

### c) Sacrifices for Phu Huean, or Ghor Daew

The only other sacrifice that could be recollectec by the Khamyang was that for the Phu Huean or house gods<sup>11</sup> which in Assamese was known as Ghor Daew. Sacrifices for the Phu Huean consisted usually of fowls, and these were presented to the house gods at the *sun phu long*, the most important house post which can be found at the eastern side of an inner room. The house gods were the same as the ancestors. They would receive such great reverence. There was no fixed time of the year which could be remembered as being particularly suitable for such flocks. Like the sacrifice for Phu Daew, the ceremony could be held by the husbander himself and no outside ritual people would have to be invited. A remarkable detail in the sacrifice for Phu Huean which was mentioned on several occasions was that the animal's blood was collected in some container and that some of this blood was sprinkled by the officiant using his left hand near the *sun phu long*. This sprinkling had to be done three times.

### Sacrificial rituals of the Phakey

#### a) The sacrifice for Phu Sua Mueang, or Sum Daew

The next among former sacrifices amongst the Phakey was much vaguer than that amongst the Khamyang. This may be taken as a further evidence for the idea that Khamyang and Phakey traditions were fully separate Tai cultures which for centuries had not been in close contact with one another. In Tipam Phakey village our chief informant did not deny the possibility that animal sacrifices had once been held but at the same time there was nobody who said who had witnessed them and could supply vital details. In the other major Phakey community of Nampakey there might be people able to assist for heretical individuals interested in ancient customs. At the time of the Tipam interview I had already reported on the Namphakey and a normal rite might be used in this case if details fit in there.

A Namphakey<sup>12</sup> was asserted that for a year there used to be held a communal sacrifice for a power called Phu Sua Mueang also known by an Assamese appellation Sun Daew. Phu Sua Mueang refers to the

at one end a decoration consisting of embroidery in red. It is an integral part of the general Assamese culture and used often to present to a guest as a sign of honour and welcoming.

<sup>11</sup> Not to be confused with the *huean phu*, mentioned above.

<sup>12</sup> The concept Sun Daew is also known in discussions about the oldest Ahom religion. Reputedly Sun Daew was an image of a god made of precious stone. It was of immense value and the Ahom kings used to worship it. Many people believe that the image was lost prior to the British period. However, there are

also many people of Tai descent who believe that the priceless treasure is still guarded in a particular family and that during the full moon night end March/beginning April the custodian will take the image from its secret hiding place, will put it on his head and show it to his circle of trusted disciples. Hitherto nobody has been able to throw light upon this report, and I am also not able to elucidate it. However, the act of placing an image on the head suggests the possibility that the image is a mask. Yearly dances in which sacred ancestral masks are shown have been reported for Laos and Vietnam. However, this remains pure speculation.

gods guarding the whole community. This sacrifice was the most elaborate Phakey sacrifice during which a buffalo, a pig as well as fowls were killed. For Sum Daew all the animals had to be white in colour. However, if a white buffalo were not available, one informant volunteered, it was possible to place a white cloth over the sacrificial animal, thus creating the impression of a white offering. There was no other Phakey sacrifice involving the killing of a buffalo that could be remembered.

As to the question whether women were allowed to attend the rituals for Ph. Sava Mucane there appeared to be no restrictions comparable to those existing amongst the Khasieng. Only in the event of a woman being already dead in pregnancy she would be regarded as not to attend. The ritual is still held at Numphakey, but Sum Daew no longer involves killing animals. Nowadays flowers and candies are presented to the gods.

### b) The sacrifice for Phu Hung

One or two similar questions of the interview comprised of a list of animals comprising birds, say, as goat, dog, cat, snake and lizard and asking whether they were ever sacrificed. Quite unexpectedly a Phakey informant suddenly halted at the mention of a dog and said that under very special circumstances a red dog used to be sacrificed and offered to Phu Hung.

A dog sacrifice would only be considered when there had been a disastrous epidemic which had lasted for over a year and which continued unabatedly into its second year. When the decision was made to hold a red dog sacrifice the village's inhabitants first decided upon an auspicious day. Then they selected a number of villagers who would have to perform the ritual for the welfare of the whole community. The number of men selected to do this task had to be odd, i.e., 11 men. These men had to appear physically fit, were selected for their personal qualities and were not there as spectators. In fact the people of the village hence a close relative was not allowed to take the place of one of these chosen men.

On the appointed day each of them would take an early morning bath. Then each of them would take all his ritual paraphernalia. This included a handful of uncooked rice from each of the affected households and also from those houses where nobody was sick. These two types of rice were kept separately. The men would then take hold of the selected dog with the reddish coat and tie it on a leash. The animal was paraded in various directions and the one in which it was prepared to walk was taken as the proper one the whole party had to take. They proceeded until they were at some distance from the village and until they found a big tree on their path. At the foot of this tree a space was cleared of branches and leaves. During the sacrifice the latter was unrestricted; no mats or domestic containers were used. Any material derived from plants in the immediate surroundings would suffice with the exception of two bundles of thatch which had been prepared beforehand. These two bundles were put down in the cleared space, one bundle placed over the other in such a manner that together they formed an 'A' sign. The rice from the houses where the sickness raged was kept close by these bundles of thatch. Then the men addressed Phu Hung in a chanting voice requesting this spirit to cause the village's misfortunes to disappear and to accept this gift of a red dog. The dog was

laid over the hatch and killed. Parts of the dog such as the liver were then roasted over an open fire and the dog's meat was brought back to the village. The persons most seriously afflicted by the contamination would already have specified which portion of the sacrifice they wished to consume, but in the event that a person was too sick to do so, the village headman or such a wish a piece was selected for him. According to the tradition, there was bound to follow soon.

The men who had performed the ceremony were received back into the village with many precautions reminiscent of ritual pollution. Thus, they were not greeted or even spoken by any of the other villagers. A set of freshly laundered clothing would have been placed next to a large tub of water outside their home so that each man could bathe and change his clothes prior to his own house. Each of these men were instructed in eating food, consuming only semi-tea, and they had to spend two nights separate from their families. Only the next morning could they join in the family breakfast and resume their former positions.

### Sacrificial rituals of the Khramti

#### a) Sacrifices for Phi Mueang

In Berkhamti Gaon several types of sacrifices could be remembered, the vagaries and intricacies of which no account of Phi Mueang was by far as most important. As far as could be ascertained, it was held for a whole year, coincidently on a Sunday at No specific season was indicated, but that it was held at a time when it was convenient to do. The festival was held on one afternoon and lasted through until the following night until about 11 in the next morning. Outsiders could not attend the village being closed during the ritual. The last time the ritual had been held in the community was in the year which began in April 1975. There was no restriction regarding the attendance of women and children other than the general prohibition of menstruating women in attending religious ceremonies. The place of holding a year's Phi Mueang sacrifice was not always outside of the village nor necessarily near a tree. Any convenient place in the vicinity was near a stream so that water for cooking would be available. In addition,

As to the animals sacrificed during the Phi Mueang ritual, pigs, ducks, fowls and pigeons were readily used. After some hesitation, it was mentioned that the Phi Mueang ritual could sometimes also be conducted as a bull sacrifice. In the latter case two bulls, usually placed on the ground and tied together at the top were used to pull the heavy wooden bushel. No special significance was given to the order of the animals. A younger with the appropriate kinswedge was the presiding priest and according to the informants he could be from any of the many Khramti villages.

On the day of the ceremony, the whole community would be busy with the general preparations. Some cooked large quantities of food, others collected the many containers with rice wine. The elderly men would generally assist the priest with supervision of the preparations for the previous ceremony. The killing of the sacrifice and the cook place about the afternoon and great care was taken to collect the blood from the sacrificed animals. Each householder brought a container for this purpose and

also there would have been taken along some pieces of cloth as well as the ropes used for tethering cattle. The blood was wiped over the cloth and ropes. The bamboo-framing baskets in which ducks, fowls and geese had been brought would also be wiped with sacrificial blood. These baskets were later taken back by the sons and daughters in the cow-sheds or pig-sties or near poultry-roosts. This washing with sacrificial blood was considered of great importance for in this manner it was believed that for the duration of a year a person would in fact never be accursed. A ritual detail which could be remembered was that araca rats and beetles were not found amongst the gifts to Phu Musong. It is true that people of Berkhamuli Gaon heter was not an appropriate gift to the gods. Rice-wine however, was prominent amongst the gifts.

### b) Other sacrifices

Amongst the other sacrifices which could be recorded were those for the Phu Hues which consisted in the killing of domestic animals in order to honour the house-gods. This was purely a family affair. The flesh would be cooked and eaten by all family members. Other sacrifices were those connected with the elaborate funeral rites. In the past, among which buffaloes, pigs and fowls were often killed.

## OVERVIEW

From the above summary of findings it may be conceded that the Khamyang, the Phakay and the Khoti people had a ritual tradition and that these customs have already disappeared. They are now able to maintain large-scale communal meetings at the village level. On several occasions for the oral performance of the ceremonial rites, so within the first half of this century, the custom of slaughtering a bull is indicative of increasing influence of Hinduism on certain aspects of the customs which appear to belong to the Buddhist and Brahmins. The information which can be gathered on the basis of the sacrifices appears equally as to the amount of interest that were devoted on this topic and the large number of people who have given accounts of their personal observations. Probably it reflects the fact that the sacrificial traditions were already in decline being by that time confined to sacrifices. What here has been discussed may therefore well constitute the last remnants of a more varied and richer set of traditions.

From the facts which were established, it has become clear that there are both similarities and differences in most of these groups. Khamyang, Phakay and Khoti people sacrifice at regular intervals once or twice a year an animal, of which it was dedicated in all cases to the guardian spirit of the village called Phu Muang or Phu Sudi Muang. In all instances the ceremony was held outside of the village. Everywhere the largest possible sacrifice of 1000 cetas in weight had to be a buffalo though a pig was more commonly the main offering. In a few cases it was deemed important to collect blood.

Apart from these three groups in rather general areas, it was clear that there were also considerable differences in what has been recorded for

the three groups. The Khamyang share amongst each other a set of two folk heroes who are included in the powers availed at the court and feast. These two heroes are unknown to Phakey and Khamti. The Khamyang prevent their women from attending the Raat Daew ritual but both other Tai groups have no restriction in that respect. The Khamyang *not* where the permanent altar built at the south side of the ancient Khamyang house was not entered amongst the Phakey and Khamti. The differences recorded are not simply aspects which single out the Khamyang as different from both other groups. The Phakey for example have never been the only group where it was specified that white animals ought to be given to the guardian spirits. Of the three Tai peoples considered here the Phakey were the only group for which a red dog sacrifice could be recommended. The Khamti proved different from both other groups in the importance given to the wiping ritual.

Such differences are partly the result of the fact that Khamyang, Phakey and Khamti represent three distinct strata of Tai culture each with its own history and no known period of intensive contact or cultural exchange with one another. However the diversity may also be the result of the fact that so few details could be remembered especially amongst Phakey and Khamti informants. It is at least theoretically quite possible that on a future occasion in some isolated Khamti community by a far-off outside the house is found. On a future occasion some venerable Khamyang specify that may recall a red dog sacrifice. It is evident that there were a need to be especially cautious regarding Pao Mueang a white animal ought to be found and offered. There is little doubt that some of these recorded details go back a considerable time and may be related to a common Tai tradition. It would be tempting to relate the customs regarding the Khamyang *not* along with the Sino-Tai *tan pha phum*. Both types of shrines are found at some distance of the houses and the types of offering which is communicated at the shrines is similar. However before such far-reaching conclusions might be drawn the cultural aspects in question must be subjected to the treatment set out in the Introduction. In other words, the aspect must be studied for all Tai peoples since as well as differences must be recorded and analysed over developments noted and the surrounding peoples' customs checked in cultural borrowing. The same applies to the Phakey red dog sacrifice. The Khamyang custom of holding a Pao Mueang sacrifice sometimes for a second time for any other interesting detail recorded. Before deciding whether they fall within a general Tai pattern or whether they constitute divergences from the norm a wide range of sacrificial customs must be noted. In writing the pattern set in Volume I, first the customs of the Ahom shall be discussed and then the customs of various other Tai groups shall be presented moving eastwards over the map of the relevant part of Asia.

## AHOM SACRIFICIAL RITUALS

### The historical background

In order to assess sacrificial customs which can be found amongst some present-day Ahom groups it is necessary to consider in brief certain relevant aspects of Ahom religious history. There can be little doubt that, when the Ahoms entered Assam at the beginning of the thirteenth century, they came with their own native religion. Already in the earliest in the literary sections of some of the Buranis sacrifices are mentioned. Thus Lueng Don (Leng Don), one of the chief gods in the Ahom pantheon, is reported to have seen Pou Pha Sac (Pushti) (i.e. the earth where he took his abode) at the time of a great famine and Lueng Don admonishes the Tamravars to make a Tamra sacrifice at the time of the annual famine.<sup>1</sup> In a similar chapter in the Tances, it is the Ahom rulers who are told to sacrifice an elephant at the end of the first year, a mare and then a cow and a buffalo in the subsequent year. This great royal yearly sacrifice reputedly should take place at the beginning of the 11th Tai month (corresponding to March/April subject to the consideration in footnote 2 above). During this sacrifice Lueng Don and a great number of other gods would descend to accept the offering. The performance of this ritual ensured a continuation of the heavenly protection.<sup>2</sup>

In the early sections of the Buranis there are also clear indications of the fact that the Ahoms used to practise chicken sacrifices and that they used to offer birds or pigeons to the tutelary. As so there is a section of the published Buranis which appears to be taken from a very old Tai law book in which traditional punishments for major social crimes are laid down. Of specific interest for this study is that frequently the culprit had to perform a sacrifice. The animals specified were the buffalo, the cow, the ox and the pig. On one occasion the buffaloes and even oilseed to the gods as test for an adulterous branch of the law are described as animals of a white colour.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore there can be little doubt that during the thirteenth century a sacrifice traditionally formed an integral part of many Ahom ceremonies. According to oral history even the name of the Patkar mountain range, which extends from northern Burma and Assam, is derived from the Ahom words *pak* meaning "cut", or "sacrifice" and *kar* meaning "chicken". Reportedly when the Ahom leaders crossed the mountain range they made a truce with leaders of in the ethnic group in the region. The contract was sealed by killing some cocks, dipping the swords in the cocks' blood

<sup>1</sup>On the interpretation of Ahom words see the Note on transliteration at the end of the introduction chapter of this volume.

<sup>2</sup>G. C. Barua (translator and editor), *Ahom Buranji*, p. 11. The eighth Ahom month at present corresponds to a solar

month which falls in June and July. Probably it refers here to an earlier Ahom year month which fell approximately at the same time.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-7.

who solemnly swear fidelity and unswerving obedience. It shows no traces of caste, or social class. Peasants, labourers, traders, artisans.

Afterwards the Tai will be asked to repeat and confirm this.<sup>4</sup> Of special interest is the description of the ritual oath taking.

In the earliest history of the Ahom there are a few signs which indicate that Hacaudha had settled over the Tai hills before the Brahmaputra Valley. However, Hindu influences in those early days may well have remained limited to some extent. Ahom probably certainly possessed a developed spiritual life. It was probably not until the 13th century that the Tai became properly Assamese. This is shown by the presence of an Ahom culture. This was mainly the result of the people's migration which began with the return of the great Sankaradeva to Assam under Madanadev. They practised Vaishnavism. They were won over to Krishna to the exclusion of all other deities. Sankaradeva and his adepts focused upon the past powers of the deities and their various beverages. Offerings had to be paid for the removal of evil spirits. Sankaradeva doffed at least four times a day each in the five approaches. He represented in his Vaishnava monasteries a Sanskrit folk mystic and divine. However, Sankaradeva's school of thought eventually penetrated Assam and was adopted as an assessment of general Ahom religion at the beginning of the 16th century. Hamlet reports that the founders of the Ahom state upheld Vaishnavism chiefly as taught by the followers of Madanadev.<sup>5</sup> Even so, the cult of Vasudeva when was still predominant. Sankaradeva is important amongst the Ahom. They were called seven often Mahabharatas or "of the great man" because they credit them to Sankaradeva. They call Dharma as Damodara. If true, how the remarkable protection of the Vaisnavite Damodaradeva?

However, as Hamlet again says, and Vaishnavism as taught by the school of Sankaradeva contrasts with the original Hindooized Ahom, but not from them. Around the beginning of the seventeenth century Anandachandra founded a somewhat different interpretation, Vaishnava. His followers are often known as Mayapuris or Mayavasis. This particular sect flourished for a few years. They also numbered many of ethnic groups in Assam, according to Hamlet. It is now doubtful whether the government in 1760, who appointed a general chief power strong as he had been weaker, the Ahom kind, has been a last and durable of Ahom power.

<sup>4</sup> In a book on Khasi history it is mentioned that the Polka range is known to a few tribes as "U Lum or syat", or "a peak where a cock was sacrificed to the deities". See Harriet Birch, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, University of Gauhati Ph.D. thesis, published by the author, 1967, p. 314. It is of course quite possible that the name is simply an Ahom translation of an older one with the same meaning and that the ritual deer bed above does not reflect the true origin of

the name.

<sup>5</sup> S. K. Bhuyan (editor), *An Account of Assam*, First Compiled in 1807-1814 by Francis Hamilton, Gauhati, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1963, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Damodaras can be found particularly amongst the ancient noble families of the Ahom, according to Paonesar Gogoi, *Tai-Ahom Religion and Customs*, Gauhati Publication Board, Assam, 1976, p. 41.

Not all Hinduized Ahom are Vaishnavites, however. There are also many Ahom Sikhs or Jains who have a more or less converted to Hinduism. The Sikhs are very few, but there are their original descendants. Under the name "Sikha" they are actually wild Sikhs, who do not practice their religion. It is noteworthy that the old Ahom king, Nagaon, in 1543 carried on the reverse of Ahom superstition by forbidding sacrifice. This may well be taken as a sign of the beginning of Hinduism in the sixteenth century. Sikhs can still be found and the ritual sacrifices of goats, of ducks and of pigeons still take place there.

This does not mean that all Hindu sects exist in among the Ahom. There are at present a large number of Ahom who have been labelled "Tribal Hindus". Their sacrificial worship usually takes place during the night, with sacrifices of cattle, which are reserved from sales, both for the purpose of the sacrifice and for the offering of the animal's blood. They possess a rich store of ceremonial songs which they sing throughout the night after the accompaniment of a new musical instrument. The ceremony begins with an animal sacrifice of a bull, followed by a cockerel. An animal will generally be chosen from the herd, according to size, having the same how much person's lips and three years. But when the festal day is approaching, certain animals are chosen for sacrifice and given as another category of offerings to whom the feast is offered. This will take place however, to describe the rituals of this interesting sect of Ahom worshippers. For the purpose of this book it suffices to mention that animal sacrifices are a regular feature of these people's meetings. For the less important occasions a few cocks, hens and ducks are offered. At large sacrifices a black boar, a tiger and other large fowls, birds may be offered. All these sacrifices form an integral part of the ritual. The animals are first formally presented to the gods. They are killed by strangulation whilst recitation chants a devotional song expressing the faith why the offering is taken. The dead animal has now carried on a kitchen accompanied by appropriate music and dance and over in the night when the preparation has been completed it is presented before the three gods. Finally the dishes are shared amongst the devotees.

In my view it has been made clear that the many Hinduized Ahom do not form a homogeneous religious group. There are many sects also sub-sects are possessing a own deities and priests. There is considerable variation insects and practices. Many will prefer to concentrate upon their religion as such, others again slightly and others consider other gods to be often in conjunction with their own. They address themselves to different segments of the Indian pantheon. While the Mahayanas offer pulses and grains, some of the other groups require a rite of eating the impure without any purification. Some may be used as echo singers consider an essential item in their ceremonies. It is possible to recognise in this several Hinduized priests two main views. On the one extreme end there are the strict Vaishnavites who seek the purely devotional religion and who avoid performing any abhors. These will not eat certain types of

\* *Ibid.*, p. 42.

\* *Ibid.*, chapter VI.

fish or meat. At the other extreme there are the Taittriya Hindus who have no food restrictions whatsoever and who regard all creatures as sacred. In between these extremes there are various types of Hinduism which are disliked in every particular way. Vaishnavites. These two extremes have been given above in a popular speech. The Ahom who stress their purity by certain offerings and at the same time are sometimes called in Assamese *kora* or *lora* (unclean). Ahom who stress these at the other end of the spectrum are the *poku*, or uncouth types. Occasional hardly one Hindu Ahom may thus find it a basic rule to be impure with another. It may occur that some refuse to partake of meat or that they do. This may refer to a kind sparing manner of eating disgusting food stuffs of other Ahom people. The latter may in turn say that it is an element of some Ahom groups and consider it no wonder that the great and wise Ahom kingdom came to an end when there were sectaries of the impudence running away with Indian ideas. However this opposition may now be described as a rite in Ahom society. It is the basis for the development of subcastes. It is the more than an opportunity for banishment. In actuality there are many Vaishnavites who are swine to themselves and others. Moreover the number of divisions amongst Ahom Hindus is so great religious as well as political that they do not easily fit into such broad categories as *kora* and *poku*.

In this varied scene of Hinduized Ahom peoples it is very difficult to recognise aspects of their religious beliefs which are reminiscent of customs in Southeast Asia. The group which appears to have kept some traditions which may eventually be traced to the Ancient Tai are the Tantric Sanytes. This may be seen in the belief in an lingam, a sacred pole in the house or in the ritual manner of presenting a bowl (rice wine). It is possible that some features of their sacrifices also trace from Southeast Asian customs. However the aspects thus far recorded of these sacrifices are basically Hindu. These include the chanting of a devotional song by all chief participants at the moment the victim is killed, the method of self-eating the animals and the ritual dances which accompany the sacrifice.<sup>10</sup>

Whilst it is traditional to describe the history of Ahom religion as thought in terms of one whereby Tai religion is replaced by Hinduism, it is also possible to present the same story from a so-called Tai Ahom perspective putting in the foreground those Ahom who had a readily access of the Tai who retained their own religious specialists and deities. From this rather unorthodox perspective it is seen that Hinduism was by no means immediately accepted. During the early centuries of their expansion in the Brahmaputra Valley the Ahom court may have taken some interest in various strands of Hinduism but the general populace appeared to have retained their old Ahom world view and religion. The kingdom's expansion and the concomitant absorption of considerable numbers of non-Ahom peoples may have paved the way for the first large scale conversion to Vaishnavism which accompanied the missionary activities of Sankaradeva and his disciples. Even then Ahom kings retained respect for their old Tai religion.

<sup>10</sup> A short description of the principles of Hindu sacrifices is found in J. A. Dubois, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1968, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, pp. 510-3.

of, it was not until the second half of the seveneenth century that an Ahom king, Tima, embraced Vaishnavism sponsored it in favour of the religion. The most important event of Hinduism which followed the king's conversion did not meet with much opposition as most people had already a considerable knowledge of it. It may be noted that the king's partiality in favour of his new religion was reflected in his royal and revelation which soon spread up. Some time earlier he was only reached under a king who was not yet converted to the Hindu religion. Sue Pat Phaa also known as Gajau or Sondi (1681-1705) apparently was sympathetic towards a sect of the Dharma known as the traditional Ahom religion. In the first year of his reign there was probably the attempt to be taken by the powers of the region in face of an external attack from the Burmese. From the beginning of the eighteenth century onward the number of the practitioners of Ahom religion increased. Sue Pat Phaa's successor was the next towards Sondi Hinduism and it became an accepted law. In 1705 he again sponsored Hinduism. It has also been stated that the king's conversion was influenced by the Mughals who were then in power. He overthrew the government and ruled the country for some time. The Ahom royal family was then compelled to flee to the hills thereafter.

The influence of Hinduism continued throughout the eighteenth century. It is a well-known fact that the Ahom population is mostly Hindu. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it is estimated to be about 70 per cent of the number of Ahom who do not fall under the label Hindu. There are, however, a number of people who have adopted other priests than the Deodhaingis, to be one-fourth of the whole Ahom population.<sup>14</sup>

It is here not argued that the traditional Ahom religion remained unchallenged or that it remained ancient and unchanged in the face of the Hindu church. As a fact it was in general. There is no doubt as to the fact that traditional Ahom religion received a check as told over the Ahom state. However, a fact which is usually mentioned in Ahom history books is that the traditional Ahom religion, the non-Hindu Ahom religion managed to maintain its faith in the more isolated villages until the present day. Some rituals are, indeed, which derive from the traditions of Ahom religion will however, in the eighteenth century and these feature largely in the following section of this chapter.

An important factor which has helped preserve Ahom religion was the fact that from a very early date, probably as early as the twelfth century AD onwards, the Ahom people have made use of written sources passing on their knowledge in pieces of bark and later on bark made paper. There still exists a large number of ritual manuscripts from numerous of years. In others more recently composed, it is owing to the continuing interest in some aspects of ancient rituals and practices. Some deal with house building, some contain various folk practices to be uttered during the ceremonies, and yet others provide illustrations of auspicious and inauspicious signs with the help of which a priest can predict the future. Un-

<sup>14</sup> S. K. Bhuyan, *Lord Anjan and the Ahom Kings*, Varanasi, 1968; see also *Assam*, p. 53. The Deodhaingis referred to as Deodhais, to by Hamilton are one of the traditional

fortunately the bulk of the material remains intact and unransacked. The text which used to be written particularly in the Tai language goes on and on. I only know about the book of B. S. N. Deka books have been gathered since they have been collected upon which all Ahom texts have been burnt. Yet the Ahom genre is easy to understand. Ahom texts have been written on unprinted paper or on coarse yellow cloth.

Recently the Park of Bhamo Ahom manuscript collection gathered from various parts of Assam and Nagaland, and the elephant tusks has also been collected and are still unopened. The series of Ahom manuscripts is now available for all. A rural tradition of the Ahom people is that their texts were orally illustrated by great scholars. The texts are collected over the years. The Ahom people had a close connection with Ahom which are in manuscripts which are now lost. Yet one of the *Hokkakam* which is popular among them. Now there is no document a few snippets have been preserved in the books. I can find the many pieces of the Ahom cultural aspects. As there is such a difference between the Ahom and the remark "Nakha" which is "Other than white swan" "take a pair of black swans" like a white swan". Ahom still the offering to be made in the Ahom temples are still the same must have been quite formal. There was a white swan and swans a pair over a white golden tray. This is the only single reference to the Ahom culture and also the Ahom. However, it must uses the Ahom language which is the same animals which are offered. It may be a pair of a pair of the domestic animals and the swans a pair of which to be understood that the swans may be taken as representative of general mortal beings. It is more an extremely specialised local knowledge. Nevertheless from the book of the record, the sacrifice was as depicted as pair of mare and foal. Also it refers an interesting range of animals which are offered as sacrifice. Moreover it is worth to note that in every sacrifice of the ritual to be sacrificed is prescribed.

Fortunately it is not necessary to study upon the few pieces of Ahom documents in order to estimate the form of the traditional Ahom sacrificial rituals. There are no records left with a work of Ahom culture where ritual texts have been to some extent preserved. This has been recorded in the case of priestly Ahom priestly class of the Deacons, the Monks and the Bishops in Ahom language these are known respectively as Mo-Sai, Mo-Sam and Mo-Pang. The manuscripts have been preserved and perused and some of the rituals have been re-enacted. Agents of the ancient Ahom religion have therefore been kept alive as a living tradition till the end of the most of the Ahom villages.

<sup>17</sup>P. C. Chaudhury (editor), *Hastividya-nava*, Gauhati: Publication Board, Assam, 1976.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 30, p. 52 and p. 146.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 46 and p. 56.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

Especially during the last two decades there has been a growing interest amongst some in the Ahom people in letting Ahom culture being known to those who possess no or little knowledge about Ahom culture being in the ancient Ahom religion. This is reflected in the enhancement of political awareness amongst certain groups like Ahom Society, Ahom Banker after the days when the Ahom aristocracy was active in the political life. Others are Ahom cultural societies which have come up in consequence in the Assam scenario. Some of these organizations have movement supporting specific Ahom principles and as a result a large document was prepared which was sent to India's Prime Minister. In this movement reference is made to the great days of the Ahom and the continuation of typically Ahom customs.<sup>14</sup>

These peoples still retain their original religious faiths, beliefs and customs. Almost all of them drink rice beer which is taboo in Hinduism. Their marriage customs differ. The Tat-Ahoms perform their marriages in Chakang form..... Ancestor worship and worship of their family and caste deities are still continued.

It is quite clear that the ~~tribes~~ ~~and~~ I forgotten I think ~~tribes~~ have gained a new status in Assam some of the Ahoms who are looking for a political identity

Personally I do not accept any of the three hypotheses mentioned above. The similarity between a Taoist and a Japanese one proves no more than that both cultures appear to have had a strong Taoist tradition. As for Taoism, there seems to be a anomaly between its basic beliefs and those of the Tao. The or rather since the idea that the ancient Asian religion was Buddhist present a quasi-historical argument to back up their theory. It is said by those who adhere to it that those peoples must have lived for

<sup>11</sup> Memorandum Demanding a Separate State or a Federating Unit Comprising the Two Upper Assam Districts of Silchar and Lakhimpur, to the Home Minister, Govt. of India, on behalf of the Ahom Tai Mongoliya Raiya Parishad, April, 1968, p. 42. Note the word "Mongoliya" in the committee's name, which is a reflection of the supposedly Mongolian origin of the Tai which has been accepted by scholars.

centuries in Mind-based Buddhist practices before it came to be. The Brahmanical Vedic religion also provided a way for people to learn the ultimate reality and the ultimate goal of life. What is the ultimate reality? Many people look elsewhere than at alloted sites for answers to such questions. Such an answer rests upon several subjective assumptions. In the first place, it is assumed that a very high level of spiritual effort is needed to attain people's salvation. This is not except. Next, it is assumed that spiritual skill is something that needs to be developed over time. There is a trace of the early Buddhist idea of the way as "Pavitra" which may sound like the term as the last one does not necessarily refer to a Buddha or a monk. All of these are the pre-supposed Buddhist phenomena. I think that the Vedic religion, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, etc., are very much personal. It witnessed Aryan invasions, and other events like the Mahabharata war, etc. All the available evidence seems to indicate that this religion was the source of all these. The label "Vedic" is that label should suffice to identify it.

Whatever is going on there is still interest in the area. There is no doubt that during the last few decades there has been a growing interest in the area on the part of Asian scientists but also on the part of American geologists. There are several major oil fields in the area. Three I visited in 1950 looked in very good repair. The tanks in the latter differ from those built in the early days and they are certainly better designed. In fact the tanks are built to an excellent standard. Some of them are on land which is relatively flat but many of the larger tanks are on the ocean front at Moran in a highly exposed position. She reports that the Mexicans and the Chinese have been attempting to buy out but that at the same time they have not been willing to give up their control of the systems. She reports<sup>20</sup>

The one held by many of the most distinguished historians has been to set  
down as the cause of the decline of the British Empire the  
white slavery of the Negroes in the United States, and the  
neglect of business during the more recent years.

In the present paper some of the main American services are described in the manner as they are at present. In the case of the

<sup>11</sup> P R T Gordon, "Ahoms", *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (edited by J. Hastings), Volume 1, Edinburgh T & T Clark, 1908, p 236.

"Thus far nobody has traced the history of the eight-sided Ahom temple. On its sight it seems possible that the shape may have been given to all traditional Ahom gathering halls. If it is the case, it may throw new light upon the remarkable fact that Ahom coins are also eight-sided. The customary explanation for the eight-sided coins is that this related to an eight-sided conception of the whole kingdom. Gogoi feels that it may have been derived from the Hindu division of space in eight directions (*Tai-Ahom Religion and Customs*,

p. 26). Until further evidence is brought forward an open mind must be kept on this issue. If full architectural details were available, the Ahom temple ought to be compared with other Tai meeting houses, such as the Tung-chia drum tower. See Lé de Beauplan, "A Muo Tribe of Southeast Kweichow and its Cultural Configuration", *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica*, No. 10, 1960, pp. 173-5.

\* I. Batra, *Social Relations in an Ahom Village*, New Delhi, Sterling Publications, 1978, pp. 103-4. See also her "The Ahom: An Appraisal of a Reviving and Revitalizing Trend", *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Dibrugarh University*, Volume VI, 1977, p. 52.

Ahoms had spiritual leaders who used to conduct a fire and ancient traditions. These leaders were called *Shilah* or *Shilahs*. From the word *Shilah* or *Shilahs*, it is evident that the Ahom leaders who have been mentioned above are called *Shilahs*. Also, I had performed what is known as *Shilah* in the Hindu cult of the gods. Similarly, I was reading Ahom words of prayer, his *Shilah* which is recited by all of the Vaishnavites. Besides, religious scholars from other cast groups, also only recite *Shilah*. The following account of Ahom practices does not intend to depict Ancient Ahom culture as a complete or thousand-century customs. They were practices which, with some modification, present-day Ahom people still follow to be a direct inherit in the ancient Southeast Asian rituals.

### Methodology

Once the informant relations were in the different areas amongst the Ahoms, I understood immediately that lack of information regarding Ahom spiritual beliefs was apparent. The best of relation was likely to be found those Ahom Farmers where the old religion had been preserved to a large extent. In the ex-religious pockets where this was case, it was found that a small sacrifice were still performed both in the open ground as well as in the village ceremonies.

Whilst the Kacharis at Pukne and the Kandis interviews had presented considerable difficulties, partly because the said local traditions had not been maintained up to date because people were oath to their Ahom interview presented most classical hindrances. Contacts were easily made and I could obtain what I wanted. In fact, some of the interviewees, which is so rare at the time, the response was exceedingly frank and direct. The list of persons referred to possess ancient documents and unique knowledge about Ahom culture grew alarmingly. Many people were eager to inform the researcher that they either of these specialists. However, when such interviews were followed up, it became clear that, whilst these "experts" were genuinely interested what was to acquire knowledge about the former Ahom culture they knew actually very little. The only information they possessed passed rapidly among amongst these people through passionate discussions about the impact of Ahom civilization upon that of Assam. Apparently the researches were passed around amongst members of the research network. This is the case. The knowledge which was shared off from these particular people was increasing with the stories quite still off if it is not described in traditional ceremonies.

In order to gain such informations it was necessary to travel to those parts - Sibsagar and North Lakhimpur districts where Ahom relation was still alive and to ascertain the local responses. The first lectures with these people were as follows: "I am the last of the last". This saying had been heard beforehand during a result a group of interested people gathered to help. As a result said person became famous by telling who among

speeches and answers thereto. Only a small amount of information which could be used for this volume was obtained in this manner. Nevertheless, on several of these occasions it was possible for the researcher to attend traditional Ahom rituals some of them especially enacted for the researcher.

From the former visits and the attendance at ceremonies it became clear that the same was not always possible. Also it proved impossible to wait for the public enactment because that was difficult to arrange and the fieldwork time was limited to about three months. Therefore it was decided to discuss the main Ahom sacrifices in detail with the priests who had officiated at them on many occasions. In order to avoid attracting a crowd I travelled to such places very early in the morning and late at night. I visited houses unannounced in the hope that a private interview would be allowed. It was a very difficult task in the subsequent interviews a considerable number of rituals would be discussed but no record had been taken of any and curios by standers would be unavoidable. The interviewee was therefore arranged in such a manner that the most difficult questions were placed at the beginning and matters of a more general discussion at the end. This method worked satisfactorily and the following paragraphs are largely the results of several of these interviews.

### Sacrificial rituals

#### a) The communal ritual called *num phra*

Undoubtedly the most important communal Ahom sacrifice is the one known as *num phra* or in the literature sometimes as *numba*. During this ritual the chief powers of the Ahom people are worshipped. This rite was performed during 10 days. The Ahom kings and he was personally present. Gobind Singh mentions that "it was held with considerable grandeur and innumerable sacrifices".<sup>11</sup> Goutam adds that it was held "for the grand of the gods and the state".<sup>12</sup> In other words it was a state even as believed to increase the chance of a good year. It used to take place once a year at Deka or in Sibsagar after the New Year festival. The Ahom king in the ritual was often seen at the various temples. It no longer takes place at yearly intervals but it is still held once every seven or eight or more years. The last time it was performed was at the end of March 1974 near the site of the old Ahom palace in Sibsagar District. If the revolution movement which has been mentioned above continues unabatedly it is likely that the rite will be performed there again. It is however since it is a ceremony which is stated to be discontinued and costly it is probably not regain its former annual character.

In the days of the Ahom king in there were reportedly two or three times in a year i.e. in January and the one would be chosen in the first week of April. The first one was at the traditional New Year festival which fell in mid-April and the second one usually in the last week of June-July. At present the day is decided by a committee of the Ahom Ahom leaders who

<sup>11</sup> P. Gogoi, *Tal-Ahom Religion and Customs*, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> P. R. T. Gurdon, "Ahoms", p. 236.

use. In astrological terms, to cover a deity at such point of time is regarded as propitious, the ritual which it warrants enables it to be performed in two days.

The first day is fully occupied with preparations. The sacrificial materials are cleared and cleaned, and the sacrificial items are made from fresh bamboo stalks, such as the *huk*, *hukhuk*, *hukhukhuk*, *hukhukhukhuk* and so on, and at some points ceremonial sets are created. The central site is divided into three sections, located in front and in the behind. The latter two are situated next to each other to left the main one on the right. In each of the three sections, a small altar is set up and offerings are made. The tripartite ritual is represented by the general division of the Ahom pantheon into three. It is performed here in the three stages for the great deities. However, the three stages of the process are also closely connected with the three stages of the ritual. In the first stage, the powers of the three great deities are invoked, the place where heaven and earth meet in the centre. In the second stage, there is a brief officiating process, and finally in the third stage of the construction of altars in the section.

The central part of the ritual is the rearing of the great heavenly tree, known as the *hukhuk* or the *huk* tree, known as the *hukhuk* in the Ahom language and *huk* in the Assamese language. An *hukhuk* and *huk* tree is usually planted in a white cloth. The *hukhuk* tree is excepted to have a central bamboo piece of wood, known as the *hukhukhuk*, *hukhukhukhuk* and so on. The upper part of the *hukhuk* tree is cut off. A section of the *hukhuk* tree is decorated with a *huk* piece of the bamboo. On the *huk* piece, a few *hukhukhuk* pieces wrapped with white material are tied. These *hukhukhuk* pieces can be placed, henceforth, on the *hukhuk* tree. This is to indicate the place for the gods. A *hukhuk* tree is extremely tall, having tree rags and other ornaments tied to the trunk. Assuming the *hukhuk* tree to be a *huk* tree, it has to be constructed in such a manner that its top is straight and its trunk is curved. From the top of the *hukhuk* tree, a *huk* piece of the *hukhuk* and the *hukhukhuk* pieces are tied on all sides. Thus from section with another piece of wood, *hukhukhukhuk*, interwoven rings made out of bamboo thread. In Ahom the priest refers to them as *saf*.<sup>40</sup>

The object of the *hukhuk* is to employ a *huk* trunk. It is a smooth piece of timber approximately 10 feet long, with a ring of the top by a driving of the *huk* through the middle of a bamboo fiber. Approximately at the bottom of the *huk*, there is a hole around this piece. Ahom priests will keep a *huk* trunk as a type post. It is said that in the past the *huk* was a flat rectangular board, but now days, a *huk* is always plain, solid and a square or rectangular carved from a single piece of bamboo trunk. It is set up with separate offering sites next to each other. These little *huk* trees are the offering places

<sup>40</sup> *Huk* constructions are extremely parts of the Buranjis. G. C. Barua (editor), old, for they are mentioned in the earliest *Ahom Buranjis*, pp. 28-29.

are respectively for the following deities:<sup>49</sup> Khao Kham, the round altar; Tien; Dina; the square altar next to the round altar; Son (for him is the central deity); and So Han, a tall stone pillar placed on the long altar. On Lam Sa, under his name seven offerings are covered and buried together in the long altar for seven months; offering to Mit Kham Ta Kun (placed on a stool) and finally Yai Nang Phra (this goddess I remember at the offering place at the right hand side of the long altar).

At the earth section of the same ritual grounds there are four chief altars all easily recognisable by their remarkable shape. Each offering place is namely covered with a large chancery cloth on which a diamond-shaped opening has been left in the front through which offerings can be passed. From left to right (as seen from behind) these four altars are dedicated to the seven cities Pha Mae Tha, Nine Ra, Nang Kham and Aa Mae Nang. Further to the right there is a large kept tree for offerings; minor posts being put to the earth so that these gifts will be placed in a row on leaves on the ground.

The third and last section begins in its left-hand side with a diamond-shaped altar of the type seen in the earth section. This is probably the altar for Lang Kae Ri. Then there is a small place for Nang Si Sao followed by a long altar with seven subdivisions for Fa Liang Kham three sections for Pha Le Khaa and further such as is seen on a separate altar for Phu Ka Tho.<sup>50</sup> Just as with the earth section a considerable space is kept pentagonal in shape, a cavity where in former offerings for minor deities can be stored. The names of these minor powers could not be recalled without the help of the name of the god whose gift comes at the last place is Chao Phok Chao Dam.

In the middle between the left and right sections of the same ritual grounds, yet another post stands free. This is the so-called rock post or pillar for Do Maling Pua Ra, a very important god standing for the power of nature. This pillar is fastened to the men of a banana tree in which five layers each of the bark can be taken to make sticks. It is at this pillar that after all the beginning — the seven days — sacrificial animals are presented first. Do Maling Pua Ra will cause persons offerings at the foot of his pillar and he will be able to inspect the varied gifts.

The types of offerings kept to the various gods include:—elephant bones because these animals have t-horned and h-ornless

<sup>49</sup> This list, like others below has been constructed from several interviews with one group of traditional Ahom people, of whom one has actually served as officiating priest in the front section of the *num phra* ritual. It is not necessarily an exhaustive or even an authoritative list. From my observations it appears that priests have considerable freedom in assigning meanings to ritual aspects as well as in pronouncing for whom an altar has been built. It is thus possible that other priests would offer varying opinions, or that other versions will be recorded at some future date, hope-

fully by persons who have been able to attend this rare and important ritual. Since, however, there are no other detailed descriptions published and since the group of informants contained some very knowledgeable persons I have decided to present their views on the *num phra* ceremony in some detail.

<sup>50</sup> "The Ahom for "seven" is chit

<sup>51</sup> The informants were not completely certain of the details in this section. The list here represents a statement in which different opinions have been reconciled.

deer, pigs, goats, hens, ducks, fowls and peacocks. Nowadays elephants, horses, bullocks are used but it is difficult to obtain in the market but last few centuries people used to sacrifice a very small goat *phra*. With respect to colour, probably colours of sacred animals vary from time to time. At one occasion a black sow was sacrificed at another it was substituted with yellow. At another it was said that in the beginning black dog was chosen as the true colour but that at present it did not matter what colour dog was chosen.

In the previous unit of the book it is stated that it is filled with the bullock's blood after which the ceremony begins with the preparation of the many offerings. The priests and their helpers might spend the whole night in the preparation of the offerings. The second day is the day of the animal sacrifices. The activities are similar and they consume so much time that there is no opportunity for the ritual leaders to rest and sleep in the evening when the crowds are more. One of the other important sacrifices is the presentation of water. Priests will catch a pot full of water from a tank and wash a small copper container with water. It is surmounted with a small fragranced plant such as the *haldi* or *gurjana*. This is placed on the altar. The keepers of offerings go to the tank at an early hour, dip a sprig and fill the water. The priests then serve by drinking water,anjali and dousing over their heads. Another important sacrifice is the presentation of *Ukhial* to De Mihane Ptu Ram. Then he runs to the section where the victim is tethered. A priest will be born at the entrance side of this section and work to the right. The reason of this is that the priest views the victim as an object of the deities and the victim always is left to the priest. Just before the *Ukhial* this priest can be seen in the front of the priest. After the ceremony, altars at the two ends are arranged and kept to the south east which is observed from the place of the officiating priest.

The front section, where the *ho lung* rises high in the air, is the first to begin with the *Ukhial*. In this section, the priest is seated, the animals are killed by a priest and his assistants. The other two sections the animals have been tethered by the cheating gress or *ghosas*. The *haldi* is applied to the animal. This is taken to the house before it is presented at the appropriate altars. The altars are taken out of all the animals and kept separately to be prepared and served. At each altar the priest and his helpers will stand on both sides of the *ghosas* presenting an array of gifts. The *ghosas* are covered with flowers and the altar decorated by garlands the priest being in a dhoti. As the *ho lung* for example where a goat is killed the altars are four separate offering places three mts apart. They are washed and dried beneath the sun. This is a very proper place for offering money. Gold ornaments, pots etc. are also kept. It is quite likely that in the days of the Ahoms there was a *ghosas* house. It would be very difficult to say whether it was there possible as a formal vestire where the priest was in duty to receive the offerings for the gods incense. Nowadays however usually 10 pigs are placed there. There was a wide area between the *ghosas* and the *ho lung* as a *ghosas* the gesture. The three *ghosas* are to the left of the *ho lung* which will each contain a pair of chickens and a *ghosas* a *ghosas* offering. The offering is fermented rice

as a dish with salted rice as a condiment and it is eaten as well as some kinds of areca nut wrapped in betel leaf.

In the earth section of the sacrificial process each of the four decorated altars will have offerings of grain and honey cakes, bananas and rice cakes as well as pieces of dried deer meat. The rice cakes are extra large, then on the third section of the altar they are placed in its nest after being arranged in the form of a cross. Each rice cake has been prepared according to special directions and are on sale prior to a variety of species including the famous fish known as *mojarra* and several other species which are not too well known or preserved for use. The remarkable feature of the offerings of all these articles is that they have to be only in the raw. Yet despite this what is presented at this part of the ritual contains no such blood as that from pigs, dogs and fowls.

Throughout the period of the second day when the people go to the gods and the market hours will be present in the temple. The priests helpers keep in case strike him in all affairs. And they will be lamps near all the pillars and keep these burning. At sunset people they will go back home with incense and renew their sacrifices. During the presentation of the morning the priest is in their helpers at the end a prayer in the Akashas like this: "We offer you as a offering the *anum phra* one day for the becoming of the last vestiges of the sun in rhythm with the moon." The moon has two phases in both effects, but one of these phases is larger than the other. Right now it is very large. This type of large moon was first introduced into the calendar in the fourteenth century. The Māyāmātra Vedic work which have been mentioned above. In the middle of the month of April the Māyāmātra went to a certain Bihār village to see the peculiar features of the *anum phra* moon such as it is in form and size. He said if it becomes like what it is at first called it would be seen an no night ritual. So a man named Bhāskarī from the same place said that it was at a part of the place near the hills as far as ten miles away and that some suitable sacred shrubs were planted on the Samsara. He accordingly went to the appropriate spot and when he told the children as well as his mother not to go near the hill. Thus it is that the large moon which is very large is called *Samsara Bhāskarī*. In the course of time the name was changed to *Bhāskarī* and eventually was forgotten. I mentioned the present reader is only a copy of the original.

The method of possessed chanting is it most common in the right sects of the spiritual creeds. When this man is said to be the spirit he often takes some of the deities to manifest the sets. They go to take possession in certain persons has been used as well. There is no doubt that the three sets as man is being taken away. These men have lived in relative isolation in the house before he could expect a thing which he sees them apart from ordinary people and we have seen others quite seriously for a duration of three days. At a first sight one of the men becomes possessed & they will all sorts of voices uttered. As far as Dr. Mahaling Phu Ra. It's suggests that as like as the worthy two of them is engaged with the aspect of spirit possession. When one of

The men has been so anxious to perform with a voice quite different from his own and he uses Ahom words. These men are not restrained in their actions by the power they have to speak with an honest face or let in any kind of impurities. But as far as I am concerned, I have no questions about the behaviour of these men. In fact, I have seen such instances and the gods may have given them such power that they can speak in Ahom language. But I am not sure about this. And the last point I would like to add is that the Ahom people were very reverent by nature. This was found by respectable people who knew a few words of Ahom to help interpret.

Sacred functions of Ahom priests - They have very lengthy chants in Ahom language which the priests sing at night and in order to give their spiritual powers. Some parts of the gods will be explained later in a separate note. The helpers are in theory of spectators, but the people of Ahom say it is an experience that there is no time for a person to be a spectator. In the past when there was available and sufficient land in each village. Nowdays the great monasteries of Ahom are the centres of all religious activities. There is no restriction now as to the observance of the days of the traditional Ahom rituals, men, women and children can take part at *num phra*.

It has been said that there is a priest called amongst Assamese "Dasi" to celebrate sacrifice of the Ahom gods and goddesses with Hindu deities. Thus it is often stated that Dasi is none else but Indra and that Yod Suri is the best equivalent of Saraswati. There is one sect of who has adopted Dasi as the Ahom Hindu pantheon and still believe in the presence of several local deities and their correspondences.<sup>10</sup> At first sight such a statement appears to merit strong怀疑. However, as far as the Ahom language is concerned, there are two cases where Dasi is equated with Yod Suri. In the second case, however, the attributes of the heaven king and Yod Suri are mixed. The goddess who guards the sky is several know as "Wester". These correspondences can be maintained as the characters Dasi, Dama, Yod Suri, Pura are examined in detail in a few other remarks below. A brief reading of the relevant sections of the Ahom *Jyotihsastra* shows an Indra-like aspects in some Dasi names as well as the word "Dasi". Greater problems are raised by such names as Lang K. R. and Surya and Paa Ben Bet with Visnu. There is ample reason to believe that characters of Lang K. R. and Paa Ben Bet may have been derived upon these Indian gods. There are other entries in the list which are the equivalents of Surya, Chandra and Arjuna namely the Dasi, the Tar. It must be noted, however, that such names are not the equivalents for simply a fair translation of the Hindu concepts and mean nothing more or less than "day", "moon" and "fire". Another series of so-called Ahom equivalents are simply Ahom pronounced repetition of the Hindu name such as Phyan for Varuna, Clark for Surya and Tuan for Siva. None of these words are in Ahom language. Two entries are false transliterations.

<sup>10</sup> P. Gogoi, *Tai-Ahom Religion and Customs*, pp. 5-8.

of Indian concepts. The first is the equation of Ma with the Abode of Indian words or power, and the second concerns the word for the Indian Naga with an Aryan word *māk*. The Naga is identified as the Tātātiya god who lives in marshes and ponds, and it is here that the Naga. Incidentally, Gopāl is seen here as a secondary spouse of Vasu, one carrying correspondence for the Aryan appurtenant a heraldical Naga spirit with whom they recognise by the same name. The problem of 1st and 2nd correspondences can be further discussed, but the obvious analogy given should suffice to demonstrate its main weaknesses. Thus, all will see it is reasonable that the great majority of the major Aryan powers which were concentrated in the designation of altitude, i.e. *surjina* and *śatru*, are chosen out in the Gopāl list, the white exorcise serves to give the opposite of what it intended to do, namely that the Aryan gods are dead and that of the Hindus must be seen as basically unrelated to those concerning the unseen powers.

During *am phra* a great number of *Hiel Ah* (deities) and processes are worshipped; indeed it has been argued that the ritual of *am phra* gives an overview of at least the major divisions in the pantheon. Since the 230+ powers are propitiated in *am phra*, it is natural that one or more of them are named in other *Ah* or sacrificial rites. By discussing a few of the smaller-scale offerings the attributes of some of the gods and processes become somewhat clearer.

b) *Sacrifices for Phii Mae Thao*

Whilst *man phra* is held for the benefit of the whole Aborigine community there are also several types of sacrifices held for the welfare of a house or One of these is the *ritual* *pla atc* *Pai Mac Thao*. I recall the name *Pai Mac Thao* means "in another spirit" her name has been given now to the earth *se buri*, *fuan phra*. Whether or not it is *Pai Mac Thao* who needs a special sacrifice is discovered by magical means. Usually there have been a few signs, through misfortunes, that suggest the house may be punishing a particular household. A ritual specialist comes in and with divination it may be established that *Pai Mac Thao* is the lone party

Reputedly it was to Phu Mae Thao that human sacrifices were offered regularly. This may have occurred once a year during the reign of the Ahom king Siva Simha (Sae Ton Phba 71x 1744). According to oral history at that time there was one clan named the Sar Toks which every year provided a young man to be offered up to the ogress deity. Such a man ought to be in good health and with a truly selfless determination.

which might disclose the excess and intent purpose of the ceremony. The so-called Ahom king was to be made to drink his own blood in the direction of the sacrifice, to do away with his power. As such, it was before the state ritual was known to be held, no one of decent mind but the her priest and teller of stories could have known of the events in the process. In this version at least it was the king but the goddess herself had chosen her own victim that neither can nor the priests could be held responsible for these human sacrifices.

It is quite likely that the basic facts were true, and that actually the Ahom kings were to be sacrificed as a human offering. As far as can be ascertained from the available records, the chief of Siva and Chamunda deities were selected to receive the royal personal offerings. Pishachi was a common name of Deities as well as the famous "copper leaf tree". It is interesting to note from the fact that its root was never used for purposes of Pishachi was the known and worshipped in the north-eastern parts of the Assam and the Kanyakubja or "rampant tiger". It must however be noted that both Ahom and the Shiva-Parkashas put at the same temple. To be provide details which I found in the book of history referred above.<sup>25</sup>

Here from a period unknown down to a comparatively recent date human sacrifices were offered year by year. It is said that latterly the Ahom kings gave up for this purpose malefactors who had been sent to the temples to be sacrificed. This was not always forthcoming, a certain special tribe (khel) of the king's subjects were held bound to provide one and in return the members of this tribe were relieved from payment of taxes, dues and market tolls, etc. It was necessary in all cases that the victims should be disfigured when found fit for sacrifice even the boring of an ear, rendering them unfit to be offered.

The king's head was to be treated the highest importance of the king's head which was said to scare-residing devils with knife sticks etc. and should be presented them before King. Not only the king's head but whatever he wanted how it was done. The situation is comparable to that of slaves being sent out in missions which will not be fully reflected. And to see what others suggest their views. You can access all the recorded facts base facts happen and know the details of the extremely divergent situations. Probably some other strong motive factors of approval and disapproval constitute stronger motivating forces than is generally thought.

This relates how the king's head should be cut at the temple and kept outside. One of the reasons that he was killed in many cases by the king's own hands. The leader may be priest or his son. To do this, blood was taken from him and as much was choiced. The head was broken in the pit as the head was a gift the god. If such he refused some of the goddess. The estimate of the king's head which was abandoned varies amongst researchers according to the entire part. These invasions but another factor that it was the king's head. Considered to be a tenth century<sup>26</sup>. Whatever the exact date may be of the practice, it is

<sup>25</sup> S. Endle, *The Kocharis, Dehi, Cosmo* <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94  
Publications, 1975, p. 94.

**d) Sankha Yatra.** The *sankha* *abraham* is performed at an open space near the Ahom Palace. Great banks of rice and other cereals are prepared for the ceremony. A *deadum* has been blessed by the Barua Sacerdote and offerings are made to him at this cult site. The *sankha* is a large conch shell which is blown to scare away evil spirits. Various parts of the conch shell are used in the ceremony. The *sankha* is blown to scare away evil spirits. The *sankha* is the Assamese is used for performing the ceremony.  
The *sankha* is吹的。The members of the family and their friends from various places they invite their friends from various places.

#### d) *Yaa Sing Phra, Lueng Don and fowls' bone oracles*

In the year 1780 AD when the ancestors of the Ahom ate salted chicken meat instead of any vegetable, *Lueng Don* was sent to take care of important tasks namely the sword hanging ceremony. This was done because he was very diligent and a good cook as well. The salted chicken is as we have seen above. It is also said that during the marriage ceremony the *lueng don* was sent to the bridegroom's house to bring the bride. It is also said that it appears that the earliest Ahom king had a *lueng don* who was a soldier during war fields<sup>22</sup>. As to the origin of the oracle it is not very clearly known. It is unclear whether it was oracle or as likely it is more likely that song refers to oracle. The ancient *lueng don* stories which is rendered in Siamese is given.<sup>23</sup> This suggests that there were 'dogs by chickens', or 'dismantled dogs'. This tradition is mentioned in a description of the use of the *lueng don*.

The *lueng don* brought the hens and cleared them and said. This is the best place. Then prepared the *lueng don* and inserted the sticks by examining them<sup>24</sup>.  
In ancient days the *lueng don* or chicken stories has been part of the Ahom tradition throughout the ages. This is testified not only by the references in the earliest parts of the Barua's but also by the existence of a *lueng don* in his time the rest of them have been of years old and written in the bark which were made likely to assist in the performance of the *lueng don*. According to the section of the Barua's mentioned above these sticks contain a large number of sticks showing two pairs of holes for birds in which four sticks have been inserted. The only difference between one stick and another lies in the position of the sticks which apparently have been inserted in the holes through which veins used to enter the body of animal, known as *lakshmi nati*.<sup>25</sup>

Again the beginning of this century Colonel Courtney witnessed the ceremony in 1865 provided some far nothing details. A Deadum priest arranges an altar of bamboo and banana tree stems. On top of this altar

<sup>22</sup> See N. C. Raychaudhuri in *an Ahom Life*, p. 94.

<sup>23</sup> C. Barua (1780-1820), *Lueng Don*, *Barua*, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> B. McTolland *The Further Incantations*, pp. 887-88.

<sup>25</sup> C. Barua in *an Ahom Life* *Lueng Don*, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> See Chaitanya Chaudhury Gogoi, "Divination by Ahom Deodhais", *Journal of the Anthropological Society of India*, August 1955, pp. 49-52.

the full wine offerings were placed in bamboo bowls. First two or three and the rice wine and salt were placed as three bowls and three caskets. The priest struck a conch shell and recited a short prayer and a spray of the black pine leaves he had flung over them. Then Yau Sia Tora and Lai Tawness were wrung out. He was wrapped in the pine leaves until they were quite clean and then he was a seat for any small holes that existed in the houses. As soon as the holes were healed some splinters of bamboo were used to塞 them. The thatch hives were set up in the air with the bamboo shanks all stuck in them and a very comparison with diagrams in a holy book<sup>17</sup>.

For the student of Tai culture it has always been known that the examination of crows in their bones sometimes placed in a hollow were traditional. A bird's life is promised. As yet this is uncertain so that the fortune teller will not let the bones be taken away from him. A priest will be called to come down and to do the ceremony. At the same time the bones are to be prepared. Some details must be given here.

At first a small crevice is made in the bark of a tree. This is decorated with offerings such as honey, sugar, rice, a vessel of rice wine and also incense and lamp. The antlers of the primate are placed in his preliminary invocations in front of the tree. When these have been placed he sits down near the altar and stretches out his arms and legs as to make a bit of space immediately in front of him. These spaces are to be places where a hen and a cock will sit close by him. If certain hawks were born in the same room then the rice wine in the vessel will be made of the provided wine, red wine or in case of desert hawk. This hawk can be found on a great bank but it will not have passed on over many generations and it rarely kills swallows as it can kill animals. It was upon hearing the request that he be made like petrified hawk. If the priest were to hit his hands he would be unable to move away. By the time the whole formula has been chanted the two birds are placed of their own accord. They are placed prepared for the pot and the fire. Having given them sufficient time each pair is to be tied and tied down. The two sets of these birds are to be placed in the front of the incense box. Specifically prepared bamboo boxes are used for these birds. They are made of split bamboo, at the bottom part of the bottom of the hole without any joint. Several pieces of bamboo are used to be inserted and they are then fastened with a string. There is a hand pair. These pairs of birds now with their bamboo boxes in a diagram which must be compared to the picture in the book and crossings must be made which are to be put on the most suitable in the other diagrams. Each picture carries a secret meaning and its respective auspiciousness or inauspiciousness. In most cases it is a secret law which helps to obtain clues regarding the happenings in the future which give rise to the request for assistance only. These pair gods predict what is likely to happen in the future.

This account is incomplete that continues in that it gives less details. The left out. It also differs in some respects from that given by Gordon.

<sup>17</sup>P. R. T. Gordon, "Ahoms", p. 236.

Thus when there or witness the event three bows were used, the method of which was completed before any the spirit to whom the altar was dedicated was summoned. These offerings are partly the result of the custom that the Ahom priests have to interpret and elaborate upon their religious rites according to traditional expectations and requirements. It is quite probable that the number of bows used denotes the time when a priest needs to order to satisfy himself regarding the future and he thus predict the best course of action. Whether the third offering may be called striking the one described by Yaa Sia Poro or Yaa Sia Saalit, it appears to be authentic whilst the other two are definitely the flavor of an individual technique, possibly due to the varying local influences. The question as to whether Yaa Sia Poro or Yaa Sia Saalit is the power to be addressed is probably not significant. A reading of Ahom mythology suggests that he is the private deity of the Ahom king in his capacity of the power who has instituted the custom of this method of divination, and Yaa Sia Poro, being his son, can pass on the knowledge and detailed instructions.

We continue to the remaining details, the two accounts demonstrate that the first method has not changed. This method of casting auguries was the most straightforward, constituting the most formal and solemn way of seeking the future at least the Ahom. It was for example, the appropriate ritual to be performed when the king wished to find out whether it was wise to attack a certain enemy and if so when and in what manner this should be done. The ritual consisted in this, in order to obtain advice regarding private matters. Since this involves the invocation of a priest who must be found willing to perform the difficult ritual and following interpretation, it is very reserved circumstances where advice is needed in truly baffling dilemmas.

Now we are on to the other parts of the animal which are examined when a person wishes to know the future. It is common practice to the Ahom to take a bone and interpret its position. Furthermore, the skull can be duly split into halves each of them shared out unlike a kambasuli. Two persons may toss those halves up in the air and watch whether they settle with the outer side uppermost or far in such a way as to expose the inner part. This game may be played between bride and groom in a trifling manner in order to find out which of the two will be more lucky. The person who first manages to toss the skull half so that the outside is up, is regarded as the winner.

### e) A sacrifice for Lat Lung Kham

In the first chapter section seven offering places are reserved for the deity called Lat Lung Kham. In the traditional Ahom pantheon Lat Lung Kham appears to be concerned with illness, both with cattle disease and human illness, especially that of a mortal character. The present-day Ahom villagers who are still practising traditional Ahom ceremonies recommend the use of modern medicines, but it is that these will not be fully effective unless the purchaser worships Lat Lung Kham.

\* G. C. Baruah (translator and editor), *Ahom Buranji*, p. 19.

It is thought that during the days of the Ahom kings there used to be held a regular state sacrifice to La Jane Kham or the King of the Country. At that ceremony repeatedly offerings were made offered to La Jane Kham. After this ceremony had taken place the king and his helpers would travel to the very edge of the kingdom a part of Assam just downstream from Nulbar called Dewardar where the Koch kingdom began. Having arrived at the border they would ritually cleanse in a rite of seven days the country up and preventing the entry of evils such as epidemics.

### *f) Sacrifices for the ancestors*

Apart from blood sacrifices which were often held during elaborate funerals and which have already been described in a previous article of this series, there are also ancestor sacrifices regular services performed at home which are said to be for the general benefit of the deceased members of the family. This is known in Assamese as *anukarana* and in Tai it is referred to as *dam phu*. Every year there are two occasions which are considered to be especially suitable for such rituals. The first is the ninth Ahom month known in Assamese as Barati during which the traditional New Year feast is held. It corresponds with April/May in the international calendar. The second month during which the ancestors need to be remembered is during the twelfth Ahom month known in Assamese as Kartik which falls in October/November. The ceremonies at these two points of time are not identical. In April the offerings must be purely vegetarian and include a good selection of food items. There ought to be also some rice cakes and rice wine as well as a piece of dried meat before leaves. Often there will be as many offerings and individual trays prepared as there are individual ancestors within one household. On the second occasion, later in the year, a chicken will be sacrificed. *Dam phu* is typically a family ritual the head of each family presides over his own ceremony and no outsiders will be invited. It takes place in the kitchen, the most sacred place in traditional Ahom houses. In this kitchen can be found an upright pole which forms part of the house construction called a *tantam*. This pole represents the ancestors. In the Barati gift a small tray is run on the ritual. First altars to the gods are made followed by a heterodoxy. Rice wine and fruit are offered. Then two further altars are set up for the preceding generations which are then the same three as the previous ceremony and the two after them. These are called *Baro*, *Choto* and *Khola* respectively. The heads of the family then offer incense to the ancestors. The members of the family have to bow down and seek blessings for the welfare of the whole family.<sup>10</sup>

The ceremony is held in the evening and if there has been a chicken sacrifice the family will share the meat amongst themselves.

The timing of the two ceremonies suggests that the formal remembrance of the ancestors is connected with the celebration of New Year. In April this ritual is timed so as to be in line with the New Year of the Indian calendar and in October/November this may well represent a survival of the Tai calendar for there can be little doubt that between the twelfth and

<sup>10</sup> L. Barua, *Social Relations in an Ahom Village*, pp. 92-93.

first Ts' on ninth, as the old Ts' New Year. This matter is dealt with in some detail in the second part of this volume.

There exist an old Ahom text, an extremely elaborate version of a *lakṣmī* sacrifice which was a highly developed state ritual commemorating the ancestors - the rājñi lāmās. This great ritual has survived to our day, though in a watered-down form. It is usually kept up as the *dam me phu*, a name in which the *w* is *dam* and *phu* apparently refer to the ritual to remember the ancestors. It is not clear what the *w* means in this name. One informant suggested that it originally could have been a hunch or a *lakṣmī* *dam* *phu* or the country of the ancestors, the abode of the lāmās - and that the word *me* has its common parlance here, still however true. It is however represents but an informer's 'hunch', and until a written evidence of a former spelling is found, the spelling *me dam me phu* ought to be maintained.

At the time of the Ahom times the *me dam me phu* celebration was attended by the king and his senior ministers as well as a large number of followers. It took place at the great cemetery for kings and nobles at Gouradeo and the ceremony would last several days. There were many sacrifices during the ceremony, especially including elephants, horses, bullocks, cows, various types of fowls, pigs, ducks and hens. These animals were offered together with a large array of fruits and sweetmeats.

*Mājanī* or *Ma* occurs every year at Chitradeo. The proper time for it is the February-March month *Māj*, during the Assamese month of *Pṛitī*. However, it differs considerably from the state ceremony it must in its origin. In the first place it has been much abbreviated. Whilst originally it lasted several days, nowadays the whole ritual is over in a few hours. At present it is a service have been called, probably in an effort to prevent it in the same of the stricter Vaishnavites who may be expatriate in the absence. The main purpose of the organisers appears no longer to be *lakṣmī* and *śrī* but rather under the pretext of a con-vocation of the former rulers a celebratory meeting for the most fervent members of what has been called the Ahom religious movement. Political considerations seem now to outweigh the usages and the student of traditional Ahom culture will need to consider these expandas contemporary circumstances. Second, the path to *mājanī* or *me dam me phu* is nowadays shows considerable Hindu influence. This is apparent in the inclusion of the Hindu ritual mask in the gōt in the manner of recitation of the mantras and at least in the last performance of the ceremony in the inclusion of milk in the food offerings.

Nevertheless, a thin substratum of traditional Ahom aspects can be recognised. For example at the left hand side of the offering grounds there was an *ākāshā* *lute* - an altar on four posts connected with the ground by four ropes, a definition covered with the aid of a bamboo pole split into four which was wrapped with a white cloth. The bamboo post rose high up in the air and was decorated at the top with a piece of banana tree trunk shaped like a banana flower. Behind the white cloth a variety of fruits were placed together with a large container with rice-wine. To the right of the *ākāshā* is a *ṭhā* or platform with the priest's position in a long row. Forty-two heralds dressed in red and during the ceremonies some

offerings are placed in each other. These tablets are of wood or bamboo, of the first two priests who have governed the Ahom people in Assam since king Sue Ka Phaa onwards.

Of special interest is the fact that, at some distance from the long row of dshes, several yards in the procession leading on the platform, outside the circle of pillars a pillar is erected. This pillar just like the one seen in the Dori Malang Phu Rong, which was constructed during *maha phra*, is made out of the trunk of a banana tree and is provided with a large number of lamp-holders, the largest of them. This part of the pillar is believed to be especially to a power of the construction to be a ritual object which is set alight when contact is being made with the unseen powers from above. The pillar's main body, however, appears to be as high as 10 feet. The small hut at *mon phra*, which appears to be in the centre of the rest when the first men here are possessed and it is fully extended. The *mon mon phra* pillar observed in the said *mon phra* is 10 feet high. The most remarkable feature of the pillar is that smaller pillars made of bamboo are tied on it, having bamboo caps. The central part is also decorated with a figure of every Ahom ancestor to be there, it is called *mon kha*. It is of greater size than the two others seen at *mon phra* and the date unknown. In the temple the *mon* is built usually ten layers, and it receives 100 lamps having ten lamps. Lamp-holders in central tip lamp has rises for a total of a hundred in all. These lights must have been更换several times and there is talk of visit in Assam. But probably this number stands for a larger number. Another aspect of *mon mon phra* which is a common word of the old Ahom ritual is that the dining priest who sits on such a stool is called by some a female priest in Ahom language and that his water is sprinkled over the ground as well as over the throng of devotees and spectators.

### *g) Other Ahom sacrifices*

Blood sacrifices form part of many other Ahom rituals. For example chickens may be killed during an elaborate ceremony of the ancient rice tree ritual. The *rik khon* ceremony has been extensively described in *Vishnudharm* and it is not necessary to repeat the same. Other sacrifices may accompany a sacrifice ritual such as that of a bull. If for a sick buffalo, and which Ahom farmers know as the *rik* or M. J. Kh. During this ceremony a miniature buffalo is sacrificed from the root part of a banana tree and a miniature male figure is placed on its back. That male represents M. J. Kh. He is dressed with a small piece of bark. It is provided with a number of black turban. The priest brings this small buffalo and its black rickshaw to the sick buffalo and then he invites M. J. Kh to come (presumably M. J. Kh stands for the sickness which is expressed). He then takes the carved scene to the forest. There a black cock and a black duck are killed and placed on a small altar together with green unripe bananas and some sweets made from rice powder. The buffalo and his rickshaw are also placed so that they face east. A further cow is killed for the spirits. It is popularly known as the *rik rik*. The animals blood is collected in a container and this is offered on the altar together with the horns, hoofs. Some feathers may be stuck in the altar. After the formal presentation of

The gifts the image is turned so that it now faces west. The meat of the birds can be taken home and eaten by the family.<sup>60</sup>

Apart from sacrificial sacrifices which an ox has been offered, there are also a variety of other smaller sacrifices accompanied by a small sacrifice. These are known as *Phrao*, *Kanti* and *Nam*. However, since the material basis of these offerings Phrao and Kanti centred on in the same ceremony, they will be left in case of confusion. A description of all three offerings would lead to a complex field which can better be dealt with separately.

### General remarks

It has been made clear that blood sacrifices form an essential aspect of traditional Ahom religion. At the present time to be noted that there are also non-blood ceremonies where at least in the form they are presented at the present moment no animals are killed. For example, the *olokhong* ritual which takes place at the newly erected temple is free from bloodshed, and the entire ceremony to honour Yaa Saa Paa is also proceeded without sacrifices. In addition there are functions related to the annual calendar cycle such as the *Chhong* which has nothing to do with blood sacrifice. These traditional rituals which are not accompanied by sacrifices are however in the vanishing. Moreover, however, there are signs that even then there is still remnants of the past preserved. Things that in the past may have been accompanied by blood sacrifices.

In the chapter on shrines it has already been to the more communal *dharmashrines*. This ceremony has proved to be a remarkable specimen that may be held in such a large scale. An array of deities is propitiated there and the ritual may safely be held that none of the other powers were consulted. Therefore the verbal division of the offering place into three categories is especially clear. It seems that the Ahom pantheon in itself could be divided in three as a group of heavenly powers, who are often in pairs, the second in the company of earthly deities chief among the four classes, and a third of heavenly powers living usually in the regions above the clouds. The ritual paraphernalia concerned in *num puram* are also Ahom style described and need to be observed carefully. The most important sacral shrine is the *ho lung*, which consists of a platform with wooden ladders and a pointed "roof" of white cloth the central bamboo string holding up the sky. The most common altars consist of square or rectangular platforms raised knee-high above the ground on small stools. The earth centres in the *num puram* are given a different name. These offering places with their dome-shaped roof may symbolise caves.

A series of remarkable objects of great importance were the ritual pillars. One of *num puram* there are two, and they seem to represent quite different deities. The front one is a simple plain uncarved piece of primitive material which has a band of cloth wrapped around it like an elephant's tail. The other one has been decorated with various heraldic figures. Lamp holders which just look like the tops of a pin cushion. The

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94. Barua describes a variant to Mo Jokh, whereby only one black duck was presented.

second pillar of the *tant phra* ritual is devoted to a god. In front of all the sacrificial animals are presented there and at the time when the incense is sounded an offering is placed at its foot. Basically this small pillar seems to be the same as the lamp pillar used during *gong am me pr*, and the large lamp holder in the central point of the traditional Ahom temple. A ritual object which proved puzzling was the *bambu* or cane which stands in all the altars in the front section of the *tant phra* ground. None of the informants could think of a reason, other than that it had always been used for the induction of that chain. The fact that these canes are raised high up above the central altar suggests that they may represent a symbolic connection between heaven and altars.

From the detailed description of some of these Ahom ceremonies it has also become quite clear that these rituals which are used by the Ahom people to be fairly 'pure' Ahom are replaced with Hindu influences. Many instances have been mentioned where such influences are quite clear. It has been shown that in one instance namely in the case of the *tao tang* Ahom gods with gods of the Hindu pantheon, the influence appears quite superficial and for the analysis, it can easily be 'peeled off'. In other instances it will prove much more difficult to sift out Assamese and Ahom elements. When it is noted for example that the presentation of gifts to the ancestors takes place in the kitchen, the most sacred part of the traditional Ahom house this feature seems to have come from Hinduism. However, the fact that one of the upright posts in the kitchen is dedicated to the ancestors and known as *sao tang dham*, has strong Tai overtones. So comes therefore, Hindu and Tai beliefs have blended. Occult belief may be very difficult to decide whether a ritual action belongs to the Hindu, the Tai, or some other tradition. In the Ahom ceremonies for example we can notice that people make use of fresh leaves from the jungle as well as the succulent green sheaths from the trunk of the banana tree to create the fashion ritual containers. It is felt that recently cut palm material is clean and pleasing to the gods. This attitude to Ahom stuff will vary among different peoples and the only method of finding out whether certain features of this belief go back to the typic ally Tai tradition is in the examination of details, first for the whole range of Tai peoples, and then amongst their neighbouring

## SACRIFICIAL TRADITIONS AMONGST OTHER TAI GROUPS

### The Shan

There are relatively few ethnographic accounts dealing with the Shan of Burma and most of them consulted did not mention blood sacrifices. Seidenfaden provides a few remarks scattered through his book. He refers to three types of occasions during which sacrifices used to take place. The first one is the funeral of a Shan prince which used to be accompanied by human and animal sacrifices. Reputedly these customs lasted well into the sixteenth century<sup>1</sup>. His second reference to Shan sacrifices deals with the foundations of palaces, bridges and city gates. In pre-British times it was the custom to bury a man or a woman alive under these foundations.<sup>2</sup> Finally he relates how it was believed in Kengtung that a terrible spirit inhabited a lake near the capital and how it was the practice, at least up to the British occupation, to appease this spirit by killing, debauching and abandoning to the wild animals four virgins.<sup>3</sup>

The first reference deals with funeral customs. The report fits in with what has been noted in Volume I of this study and needs no further comment other than that Seidenfaden does not tell us from where he obtained his material.<sup>4</sup> The second example which mentions human sacrifices under foundations is most interesting in a wider perspective for as we will see later in this book there are trustworthy accounts of very similar practices in various regions in Thailand. Seidenfaden's last account of human sacrifice is the most difficult to assess. Not only are all references missing so that it is impossible to find out upon what type of information the report is based, but also the detailed descriptions of the ritual which would make it valuable for this analysis are lacking. Until the present day I have not come across other accounts of violation and immolation of virgins for religious purposes amongst the Tai.

Yearly Shan communal festivals include one to the spirit of the market place. If the people omit to present this spirit with such an offering it is believed that destructive epidemics or famine may result. Reputedly every leap year special gifts are offered which consist of a hut built in the grounds of the chief's court house and meat is cooked and offered to the spirits who are requested to look after the town's welfare. Again this account is devoid of the ritual details necessary for a comparative survey. Somewhat more helpful is the mention of a Shwe in the report of a shrine of the 'heart' of the mountain. This guardian spirit of the mountain apparently has a brick altar which is situated at a banyan tree. On the first day of the festival offerings

<sup>1</sup> E. Seidenfaden, *The Thai Peoples*, Seidenfaden's customary attention to Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1958, p. 42; scholarly detail.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> The book was arranged, posthumously, from rather rough notes and does not reflect

J. H. Telford, "Animism in Kengtung State", *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Volume XXVII, Part 2, August 1937, p. 135.

of this spirit a tray is prepared in which there are four small animals, cloth, tea, tobacco and various foods. This is placed on the altar and then taken outside the town where it is burnt. In this manner the evil spirit is driven away. The ritual starts again and led away". This stage of the described ritual appears to be an alternative version of the typical Tai ceremony, which besides the White Tai as *chu mulsang* for the Tai of Assam, as *chukhong* for the Naga, and for the Black Tai. The *batsu paan* ritual described in the *Naga* of the previous chapter may constitute another variant procedure. I continue the ritual by the *gurungan* spirit, by which all the seven big heads of household assemble at the big tree in the courtyard at the spot

The Line

Also for the Lue there is mention of several ritual customs and several customs, and there is no need to repeat all of them. There are here exist several eye witness accounts of a sacrificial ritual for which also amongst the Lue is known as Phu Meuang. At the end of AD 1877 such a ritual was attended by Dr Kowitz a trained bacteriologist who details which prove relevant for this study.<sup>2</sup> A few soldiers came to purchase a buffalo, and the adult men had been sent to another altar just outside the village. Women are not bound in the process nor they are excluded from the whole ritual. The ritual is to burn a stink pole which stands in the street in front of the altar. The latter consists of a platform some six or seven feet long and two wide made of wood. This altar covered with white cloth is built on the ground and is not being looked after by its own priest. In the center stand three powers propitiated is Phu Meuang the spirit of the land. The other two are guardian spirits of nearby settlements. The priest asks the people to gain the attention of these deities so it is. Before a sacrifice is intended a going is demanded. A number of the Lue who are now is hired for the purpose then comes forward. He goes around the animal and then kills it with his knife. He cuts off the animal's head to let it bleed to death. He then cuts the animal in a north-south direction this is interpreted as sacrifice to the earth who be poor. The hiring of a Daniel is the last and final stage of Buddhism, none of the Lue wishing to perform such an act.

The bullal - b - having been killed in his - the animal is cut up into twelve parts. Then every head - which is the name given the animal's nose pointing to the north. The meat is cut into small pieces and dishes are prepared. On each of the twelve places in the outer room of food are set down. The priests partake one by each hand and then formally invite the powers to partake of the meal. They said "

"On this occasion we invite Tao Fa Luong (in our transcription this is probably Chao Faa Luang), the Great Spirit of the Heavens, who is

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* p. 16? The appearance of clay images of domestic animals may represent a substitute of real animal sacrifices, presumably under Buddhist influence.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>1</sup>P. M. Lebar (et al.), *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*, p. 213, citing

Chang

\*The following account is based upon K G Lekkowtiz, "Notes about the Tai Bullelin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm, No 74, 1962, especially pp. 76-77.

28 *Jind.*, p. 76.

so kind and the spirit of the great town (who was the guardian spirit of the place of old when there were many buffaloes). We invite the Great Spirit to come and partake." Then followed a whole row of names of different spirits.

Unfinished. I have not yet made the two or three  
Of the different powers in the craft of the state in which there is no  
mention of the Great Spirit as the guardian of the state, but of the  
three spirits I have noted so far are the good qualities. It  
is clear, however, that the spirits and the deity are identical, and  
the power taken is not the same as the gods are. I have noted  
several such instances. They are mentioned again together. The re-  
maining ones add nothing back to the three to be shared with women  
and children.

Another interesting ritual is the *Chak* that during the ceremony the  
priest will pull it from the mouth of the stage being performed  
and leave the ceremony. Hence, usually *chak* means tears are  
set alight on big brazier sticks. These are prepared by going up to the  
stage. These are intended to remove known bad qualities. Tai  
rites differ as follows. At the end of the above mentioned ceremony two teams  
gathered around the priest. These enacted a ritual dance car-  
ried on the shoulders of the priest and his helpers. This is called  
"The priest carries a person". It is called the *Chak* or *Pu Muang*. It appears to  
be more related to the New Year celebrations. It has been removed  
from the Tai peoples and it can still be witnessed amongst some of  
the Assamese Tai. An analysis of that aspect can be done later in  
this book.

Quite independently and apparently unaware of Link with' field notes,  
Deenens account, this was reported to me village elders about the *Pu Muang* sacrifice. At Ong Taw the ceremony for *Pu Muang* occurs only  
once every three years always around November. It is presided over by  
two priests, the eldest of whom says the necessary prayers. The offerings  
consist of four chickens, two for each priest and a black buffalo. The  
chickens have been killed before the *am* taken to the offering place which  
is situated near a huge tree at the entrance of the village. The buffalo is  
taken alive to the tree and bound to it. A man specially hired for that  
purpose kills it with a sabre. He also cuts the animal up in twelve parts  
and these are laid inside the sacred shrine except those in the hands of the  
chief priest and his son-in-law. During the prayer a small amount of  
alcohol beverage is placed in the *am* at the foot of the tree. The master  
in whose name a sacrifice is made prays on behalf of the nation's  
future. If the buffalo has ever struck his eye in the previous year  
a good year may be expected. The main *Chak* or the rest is  
a horseman. When Deenens was inserted in his harness he said  
he had died. For the rest of the day he lay under the roof in  
the front room of a house where a stable was kept.

\* The Shan who settle in the northern parts of China, Laos, Thailand, Burma and Siam are  
descendants of See J. F. K. Edwards, "The Shan and the Tai Muang",  
"Thread-square and Taiaco in Indo-China", 1970, p. 424.

Chung", Proceedings of the VIIth Intern.

ANSWER. It was the custom to bring the dead persons to the village.<sup>18</sup>

NOT long afterward D. Peter had the body carried away the same evening at Oa Nau, another village near Rongchon, in order that there would be no disturbance on the 20th. The 20th pertains to the year in September. December is the 1st month, January the 2nd, February the 3rd, etc. The 20th is the day of the tree. During the great sacrifice the body is laid in the existing shell so that the soul can take up its abode. The two pillars are erected before the Phu Muang tree. This is the 1st day of the 1st month after the 20th. A priest is sent to invoke the spirit of the tree and to make offerings. If the tree has three branches, a small shrine is erected against the tree. The priest reads the name of the tree and burns incense before it. Then he reads the names of the 12 animals but in reverse order, starting from the last word. Each animal is divided into six portions.

There is also a custom that the Phu Muang shrine is built of the 12 trees. There are 12 numbered trees to select from 8 animals. One which is not the tree of the Month of September and of November. At the start the two people who are performing the ceremony nearby calculate a nail to be fastened to a piece of a tree. These calculations are never lost. In all cases the tree is cut by the priest himself. After the cutting of the tree four pairs of cords are tied to the tree. These may be red. In all cases it takes place just before sunset. In a three reverent. In all cases the offering is presented in two separate portions of meat.<sup>19</sup> In all cases there is a prayer asking for protection and there is a method of saying "We give you this tree so that we may present the future." In a few rare cases a large tree is chosen to be the place where the vestes can best be contacted.

### The Nua

In the literature may be found a Nua, which is an omen. It concerns the story of a tiger which was sent to burn down the Nua village. Another tiger came to the Nua village and managed to escape this danger.<sup>20</sup>

The Tai Nua village just below our Mission compound was not burnt.

It is recorded in the history of the country, that the tiger spared the Nua village because of the tiger's fear.

<sup>18</sup> H. Deydier, *Lokupala, Damonen, Totems und Znuberer von Nord-Laos*, Berlin Nauck & Co., 1954, pp. 97-98

<sup>19</sup> Another informant called the tree spirit Phi. Fee.

<sup>20</sup> Lafont also is aware of the existence of the custom. See P-B. Lafont, "Le That de Muong-Sing", *Bulletin de la Societe des Etudes Indo-chinoises*, N.S.,

Volume XXXII, Pt. I, 1957, p. 42.

"The twelve portions are related to the twelve shrines erected in "The World of the Then" after the arrival of Khan Borom. Personal communication with Professor C. Archimbaud, December 1950

<sup>21</sup> W. C. Dodd, *The Tai Race, Elder Brother of the Chinese*, Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1923, p. 213

that the National may have been re-arranged and states the following  
are the effects which we have observed. In the first place  
the 48 Victor is now the most powerful party in the country  
and the VI is the next most powerful. Next comes Central  
followed by Labour Party and the other  
parties are now in the Name of a few  
but they are not able to do anything of any real  
power

The Year

This is a remarkable long-term study, despite the difficulties of  
making a weather assessment and the fact we are looking at a 100-year  
cycle. The up-slope gradient of the rainfall fluctuations is  
noted after the same 40-year cycle has been observed.  
The results of the 1960s and 1970s are also noted. The  
Sai Khoua basin has the steepest gradient in the mountainous  
headwaters and the least variation in the lower reaches.  
It is of interest to note that the mountainous areas have  
the steepest gradients. This is the major finding of the paper.  
The mountainous areas in Laos are known to be more  
prone to landslides than the lowland areas. It is  
not clear whether this is due to the higher rainfall or the  
steeper gradients. It is also interesting to note that the  
mountainous areas did not receive as much rain as the lowlands. At  
the same time, it is also noted that the dry season rainfall was not  
as much as the wet season rainfall. It is difficult to say if this is due to  
the mountainous terrain or if it is due to the lack of data.

as been noted for some years or less, that many Buddhist monies, without baiting an eyelid, watch how fowls and pigs are offered during temple feasts. They are first Tao, and Buddhists only in the second place.

As far as I can see, the best way to proceed is to have the two groups meet at a neutral location.

<sup>55</sup> C. Notton (translator), *Annales du Siem*, Volume I, Paris Imprimerie Charles Lavauzelle, 1926, p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> One of the rain-making ceremonies occasionally still observed in central Thailand.

land consists of being a group of monks chant in a field. During this chanting minor breaches of conduct are tolerated and even encouraged.

<sup>18</sup> H. Deydier, *Lokapala*, pp. 100-101.

falling into the month. The buffalo sacrifice at Dali Khan town takes place in the month of June if the rains are late.<sup>20</sup>

Not mentioned earlier were other sacrifices which were regularly held in the region. One of these was held at Ban Na fort the spirit called Phu Lang Chiang Cha. The kings of Chiang Mai and the people living between Chiang Mai and Raenay used to venerate this spirit and at regular intervals they offered a buffalo sacrifice. In the time that Ban Na was placed under the administration of Ruheng the custom was discontinued. The custom for buffaloes were however still available to be used. Furthermore there used to be sacrifices at Chiang Mai and elsewhere during the traditional New Year festival and in the seventeenth century there were buffaloes. Small chickens were killed fifteen times. From them as a present to the spirits it was the upper privilege.<sup>21</sup> In the sixteenth century the Chinese King used sacrifice a buffalo before sending out a fleet.<sup>22</sup> Moreover there were yearly sacrifices of a black cow, a white buffalo, Renshan the east was abandoned at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> The administration was all round and involvement with this type of sacrifice ritual during the nineteenth century is borne out by R. de Josselin's report that as he had been in the region of Muang Lai in 1840 he saw had a *huk*, or coarse silver on account of sacrifices to the country's protecting spirits.

These sacrifices are another name for public feasts as the buffaloes, pigs, and poultry, together with the spirits, which are provided, are consumed by the people.<sup>24</sup> Buffalo sacrifices are mentioned for various other occasions. The king of Chiang Ra in the course of an attack on Chiang Mai sacrificed a white bull but re firing a cannon.<sup>25</sup> In another account when King Tilkarat of Chiang Mai sent an army to Muang Nan a sacrifice was needed which included a white buffalo, chickens, ducks, as well as gifts of mats, seats and betel chewing equipment.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore during the treaty of 1819 between the King of Chiang Mai and the ruler of another *muang* a buffalo was killed its blood mixed with alcohol and this mixture was drunk during the formal act of friendship.<sup>27</sup> Finally it is reported that sacrifices took place at the Chiang Mai city pillar *lak muang*. At the official installation of the pillar a pregnant woman was impaled on a spear to create a strong and fierce protector spirit of the city.<sup>28</sup>

### The Siamese

The fourteenth century inscription of King Ram Khamhaeng of Srivijaya tells how the ruler of the kingdom has to make offerings to a mountain spirit.

<sup>20</sup> C. Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Volume I, p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>22</sup> P. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Notes sur des annales siamoises*, *Annales du Musée Guimet*, Bibliothèque de Vulgarisation, Volume 43, 1926, pp. 35-36.

<sup>23</sup> C. Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Volume I, p. 205.

<sup>24</sup> Reported in A. R. Colquhoun, *Amongst the Shans*, New York, Patagon Book Reprint, 1970, p. 256.

<sup>25</sup> C. Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Volume III, Paris, Geuthner, 1932, p. 93.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111. The text mentions thirteen fowls and thirteen thousand ducks. The latter amount seems excessive and not to coincide with what may be expected during Tai ceremonies. I suspect a mistake in the manuscript used by Notton. I have not been able to check this with a version of the original.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>28</sup> C. Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Volume I, p. 205.

and that when they are born it is up to parents to offer and when they die the same thing will have to be done; however when the spirit of the dead leaves the body before the soul will be lost.<sup>48</sup> In addition, a small cloth or a small cloth wrapped around the body is also offered to the dead as a means of their protective material. In this way the dead man's wife shall be assured of his safety in the underworld. It may be assumed that this involved at least a buffalo sacrifice.

However, there is another possibility that Ratchakanhaeng could have been referring to the Buddhist戒律 (rabbaniya) of his reigns rather than to the Buddhist戒律 (rabbaniya). However, in Siam as well as in Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Siam's kings have long managed to coexist in a tacit alliance with the Buddhist church with a perpetuation of some forms of animal and even human sacrifice. That at least some of Siam's kings were themselves even in adverse to shedding blood in ritual sacrifice for the benefit of their country, is attested by the monk Ananda. According to him in the seventeenth century it was the king who ordered the execution of 10,000 slaves where fortifications were to be built in order to try in effect to create guardian spirits who would help prevent the enemy from taking the city. In 1634 the King ordered that all those who were to be arrested and punished for the crime of rebellion be beheaded. The king refers very clearly to the fact that he had them beheaded as extra-judicial law and that he gave them only a quick reprieve for the execution of the sentence. He also adds that in later fashion he had his slaves beheaded in such a way that they were actually killed.<sup>49</sup> There can be no doubt as to the accuracy of this account.

There are, however, two other important points. First, as at the time when Ratchakanhaeng reigned, there was still, in contrast with the situation in the modern period, no one of these traditions reflected in the inscription. Therefore, if it be argued that the city pillar was built when the slaves were actually burned alive, it must be admitted that it means that the custom of creating a human sacrifice of the slaves which is also recorded in the inscription, was still in existence. Second, the customs surrounding the *luk mucang*.

Over 100 years ago, according to the sources, there are very few remains of human sacrifices in Siam. Pre-Angkor Reaktion refers to the last sacrifice of a slave in 1830 as a legend. This is

<sup>48</sup> A. B. Griswold and Prasert na Nagara, "The Inscription of King Ramkamhaeng of Sukhothai", Epigraphic and Historical Studies, No. 9, *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume 59, Pt 2, 1971, p. 214.

<sup>49</sup> L. F. van Ravenswaay translated van Vliet's "Description of the Kingdom of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume VII, 1910, pp. 18-20.

Note, for example, Mgr Brugière's account in *Annales de l'Assemblée de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1831, quoted by

J. B. Patricot, *Description du royaume Thaï ou Siam*, Farrborough Gregg International, 1969, Volume 2, pp. 50-52. This has been translated into English by H. G. Q. Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies, Their History and Function*, London Quaritch, 1911, p. 305. Patricot adds that he does not wish to vouch for the account. For details, see B. J. Terwiel, "The Origin and Meaning of the Thai City Pillar" *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume 66, Pt 2, 1978, pp. 161-62.

done once a year, at the beginning of the rice planting season. After the sacrifice, the owl's tongue is examined to see whether the season will be good.<sup>20</sup> In order to find references to similar sacrifices I checked through scores of publications which have their contents as their subject. Thus far this search has yielded no results. The nearest I have come to mentioning any animal sacrifice is when they report that a person might be asked to eat on certain occasions when a spirit *tayut* is sought. In all cases it is implied that the animal is not slaughtered near the altar but killed somewhere else preferably by someone else. During my own fieldwork in Ratchaburi province I witnessed and took part in such a ceremony, which in this instance was intended to invoke the powers in order to make a batch of young men, who had recently been tattooed, invincible. This ceremony was held in the most sacred place, namely, on the platform in front of the main Buddha image in the Buddhatat temple. Among the gifts which were prominently displayed on this platform were a pig's head and four trotters obtained from the butchers in the nearby provincial capital. Later the head was cooked and shared amongst all those who participated in the ritual. A similar ritual is described in the famous Siamese poem *Sa Phra Raching Khun Chauang Khan Phaen*, when King Phaen and P'la Kaew raise the spirits in order to obtain invulnerability. They offer a pig's head, chickens and ducks.

Although at present the Siamese appear to refrain from blood sacrifices they have maintained in the rural areas a rich tradition of village guardian spirits. Such guardian spirits have a home, Ien at the periphery of the built up area and a command function. They are often visited before the main religious processions. Offerings to these guardian spirits include usually uncooked boiled chicken, boiled eggs and a box made cigarettes, as well as a single stick Chinese candles and flowers. Some social scientists who have carefully observed these rituals have recently reported on their findings.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the monthly ceremony, attendance at the annual one is considered mandatory by all members of the community. Every such gathering requires the participation of the entire adult population of the community and the entire town as well. A large crowd is present. Again, Pau Tau is reputedly taken along, and for forty years under whose influence they will sing, joke, tease, tell stories or dance. Small boys in the crowd are often given small gifts of money and dried fruit as a reward for their good behavior. After the ceremony, a gift is given to the shrine. The people then return to the temple compound, bathe and stand near Pau Tau's shrine....

These details in listing the assets I spirit possession are reminiscent of the annual ceremonial sales recorded thus far and it is plausible that

<sup>2</sup> Phya Anuman Rajadhon, "A Note on Divination by Abom Deodhañ", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume XLIII, Pt. I, 1955, p. 53.

"A similar substitution has taken place in Laos, where four pig's heads and sixteen trotters are amongst the gifts to the spirits. See Chao Kham Man Vongkot Rattana, "Les rites du culte des phis au ho vang-ni à Luang-Prabung", *Bulletin des Amis du*

*Royal Soc. Lond. Philos. Trans. B*, 1971, p. 99

<sup>4</sup>Kathleen and Phornchai Srirapha, "Puu Taa A Description of the Guard as Spirit Cult in the Pak Phi District, Nakorn Nayok, Thailand, and its Implications for Rural-City Migration", Paper No. 8, presented at the Tha-European Seminar on Social Change in Contemporary Thailand, 28-30 May, 1980, p. 9.

the present fable of chicken is a survival of former sacrifices. There is no doubt that the cult of the *tae* or human spirits is well spread in rural Thailand. Many such sacrifices were present during the presentation of the paper at a club conference I having witnessed at that rituals in "their" rural region.

### The Tai of southern Thailand

The terminology used in the Tai of southern Thailand is similar to that of central Thailand in that a "sacrificial blood sacrifice" is found in their customs. This probably is a reflection of the force of Buddhistism in the region. However there are customs which apparently have not been greatly influenced by Buddhist ethics and precepts. Thus an account of ceremony observed in Tatum, an elephant drive shows that blood sacrifices were known. The sacrifice which was intended to ask the *phu* to protect the hunters consists of:<sup>26</sup>

seven fowls, five ducks, five blue crabs, three or five horse-shoe crabs, the head or flesh of a pig, one bottle of spirit, some tubes of scorched glutinous rice as well as of ordinary rice, some tomatoes prepared with *khao kriab*, two bamboo stems, flowers, two green coconuts, some red sweetened cakes, and white bands made of flour or ground rice, some *khanom lao*, a cake similar to the former, rice-wafers, and some boiled rice.

After a ritualistic thanksgiving feast is held and for this is needed "three ducks, three fowl, spirits, three buck and three horse-shoe crabs, + one bamboo rat...".<sup>27</sup>

### The Tai of northeast Thailand

In a Thai book on old customs in the northeast of the country rituals for the ancestors and those of the Meane are joined together.<sup>28</sup> Formerly, when on the first day of the new year (April) people would kill animals such as cattle, sheep, pigs, ducks, fowls and offer these to the *phu*. These sacrifices were offered especially after heavy rain or even worse rainfall might be witnessed. Moreover it is noted by Sapheng that once the spirits were asked to remain a certain period of time. Sacrifice could not be completed in a different type of gift without causing the spirits displeasure. In the same source there is a description of a chicken sacrifice and distinctly a practice very similar to that mentioned by Pava Anuman Ratwibhun above. This is the case in honor of Phu Taa Hack a spirit which is propitiated when people first open a new field and during each subsequent year. After the sacrifice and cutting of the chicken the tongue bone is removed. If the bone's membrane is white this is interpreted as a sign that there will be plenty of water. If it isatty and generally looks like a yellowish tree will be cut and regardless that prosperity may be expected. However if the bone is sharp, blunt or deformed there will be little rain and the rice may be expected to die in the fields.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> F. H. Gles, "An Account of the Rites simpler version is mentioned and Ceremonies Observed at Elephant" <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p. 182

Driving Operation in the Southern Provinces," Bangkok Krungkraphet (compiler), Vice of Lang-Sum, Southern Shan," *Propheenii Thaif Boran*, Bangkok; Prae Journal of the Siamese Society, Volume XXV, Phitsaya, 1962, pp. 749-50.

pt. 2, July 1932, p. 168. On p. 170 a <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 755.

Other sacrificial customs for this region can be found in the aftermath of the rituals depicted by Giles. Before the year's hunt for the great catfish in the Mekong River an intricate set of propitiatory rites is said to take place. One of the spirits to be propitiated received eight live ducks, nine betel leaves, woven leaf cases, flowers, bracelets, ear-rings, sweetmeats and the two fowls. Another would be given success in his hunt for a pig and in the third year a buffalo. The animal would be divided up and the head presented and would be stored in a silver vessel nine separate dishes would be offered and a medium would communicate the propitiatory spirit's predictions. Now the catcher would turn up at that year. And his spirit would receive pork, duck and fowl's flesh.<sup>10</sup> In a different hunting ritual described for the region no medium was consulted but the likelihood of a good catch was determined with the help of a divination. A boiled egg was peeled and cut into six equal parts. If the yolk was visible through the egg white at any place it was taken as a favourable sign.<sup>11</sup>

### The Laotians

In twelfth century its strong Buddhist tradition state sponsored blood sacrifices were carried out in Lao language ceremonial history. For example it is recorded in the annals that the founder of the Dhammikamed in performed a sacrifice which must have been quite substantial in which he offered as many as thirty-six buffaloes.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the kingdom many spirit shrines (or *phi*) were established and each year at the provincial ones the priest caretaker used to receive from the government a certain sum of money to help organise the communal sacrifice. The state paid for a day for the usual money the eighth day of the month in summer. The seventh month a tax which usually fell in June. This custom of partly financing the sacrifices from state funds stopped in 1958. It is to be noted that some many state officials would help defray the costs of some of these rituals.<sup>13</sup>

In some Siamese case where the *phi* are apparently have lost most of their sacral importance Buddhism has not been able to change Lao cults *phi* rituals in such a manner so as to take away their power just as<sup>14</sup> Christianity did for the purposed. In this study there have been some detailed descriptions of the sacred *phi* or *sa* rituals which have been largely fairly recently. Here the first of three of these were chosen as to be presented so as to enable

<sup>10</sup> F. H. Giles, "An Account of the Ceremonies and Rites Performed when Catching the Pla-Buk, a Species of Catfish Inhabiting the Waters of the River Me Khong, the Northern and Eastern Frontier of Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume XXVIII, Pt. 2, 1935, pp. 91-111.

<sup>11</sup> F. H. Giles, "An Account of the Hunting of the Wild Ox on Horse Back in the Provinces of Ubal Rajadhan and Kalawandhu, and the Rites and Ceremonies which have to be Observed", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume XXVII, Pt. 1, 1934, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> P. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Notes sur des*

*amulettes stamponées*, pp. 34-35. Cf. C. Archambault, "Les annales de l'ancien royaume de Sieng Khwang", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient*, Volume LIII, Part 2, 1966, p. 606.

<sup>13</sup> Chao Kham Muu Vongkot Rattana, "Les rités du culte des phi au ho vang-na à Luang-Prabang", p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> Regarding the strength of the Lao an *phi* cults, and their fairly harmonious symbiosis with Buddhism, see, for example, G. Condominas, "Notes sur le Bouddhisme populaire en milieu rural au Laos", *Bulletin des Amis du Royaume Lao*, Volume 9, 1973, pp. 96-97.

the nature of ceremonial details which are so important in narrative ethnography as well as the use of the temple and the ritual as found in the cult of the Hmong in northern Laos. Then there is a brief summary of the traditional customs of the Lao.

In Lao Phabang there has been a tribal festival which takes place every year in the fifth month. It is held in May before the result of the harvest. The two who are the chief recipients of the offerings are known as *Guan* (Chief) New and Grandmother New. However the four main spirits of the mountain also the ancestors of the tribes whose lands are officially reserved at their shrines. They receive the offering once for a year at the traditional New Year in which falls in April and in the twelfth month at the end of the rainy season. A spirit of Arhat built the cult of masks was recently also seen in Sene Kham where in the second half of the nineteenth century the mask were found. When these masks are exposed they are not in a row. In the first, it is visible have already shown that it is the last. A person sees an extra mask. This is the cult of the mask which is quite striking for the masks are black like human eyes and open mouth with masses of fangs seen by way of hair and pine the borders has twelve. From position 9. During the night before these Pii Mien of Luang Phabang in May at an early stage of the ceremony six fire signs are placed around the altar. A black cloth picked up by the community is taken and hung. The blood is collected the hair from a goat then the animal is cut into pieces and boiled together with leaf beans which are also added to the great water. The pieces liver and stomach are cleaned and are dropped in the big pot with boiling meat. The intestines after washing and cleaning are toasted above a fire. Meanwhile the altar is prepared. A pole about two metres tall which is called the *luu luu* or "aloch" post is erected. On top of this pole a *takam* is fastened and halfway down a ring is attached. From this ring two chains are hung one consists of five small bars fastened together like rings a rope is tied the other made of five rings fastened together. These chains are called the "chain of the short hairs of the horses". At the foot of this pillar a tray holding two clusters tied with rice stalks is placed and in each of these containers two reeds are stuck like in rice wine containers. The reeds are connected with rattans to the post. At the appropriate place two mattresses and pillows are arranged. The Great Mother in Lao or Mother New above this resting place a white cloth with a red border is hung. A ceremonial and a pitcher of water are given by way of preliminary offerings. Near by are a tray with six small cups a dish of betel chewing etc. present a teapot

<sup>4</sup> The following paragraphs are based upon the painstaking reporting by C. Arcambault in his article "Le rong du ho devata luong à Luong Phabang", p. 218. See also "Le rong du ho devata luong à Luong Phabang", *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indo-chinoises*, NS Volume XLVI, 1971, No. 2, pp. 215-85.

"C. Arcambault, *Structures religieuses luo (rites et mythes)*, Vientiane: V thagné 1973, pp. 20-62; and his "Le rong du ho

devata luong à Luong Phabang", p. 218. The same masks, described as "grinning devils with horrible fangs, enormous ear and a tangled mane reaching the ground" are used by the agglomeration of ethnic groups in Vietnam known as the Mèo. See H. Blaauw, *Indo-China and its Primitive People* (translated by E. Appleby H.D.), London Hutchinson, o.d., pp. 190-9.

six bananas and two hard-boiled eggs. At some distance from the mattresses a bowl with pork, grilled viscera and a bowl of blood, as well as the four boiled chickens are also placed on the floor. Sugary gifts are also presents to some minor spirits, consisting of coconuts and sweets. Sugary gifts are also presented to the ancestral couple Nyeu. At the place reserved for Grand-ter Nyeu the offerings consist of a small tray of rice. The drum is sounded and alcohol is offered to the spirits. The ritual meal is brought over to a spot near the pillows. At this stage the male medium who has been sitting next to the priest, shows signs of spirit possession and he is dressed in the clothes which have been brought especially for this purpose. A crown of flowers is placed on the head. When the spirit has descended into the medium, food and drink is presented to him and cotton strands which are around the alcohol containers are blessed by him. The priest then, in a deferring manner asks about the prospects for the community, whether there will be epidemics, whether the rains will be abundant and whether there will be a bumper crop. This is done through the priest via the medium telling, on the occasion here described that, if the spirits are properly feasted, good prospects may be expected. A ritual dance is held in front of the medium in order to please the spirit and soon afterwards the spirit suddenly leaves him in the room, backs to the shrine and dances. One by one in a fixed order, other great spirits take his place and each of them has a name, the first being the spirit wife, one performing a sabre dance, another soberly remaining seated. There is more opportunity for questions and the host goes forward to speak forward for advice regarding private problems. This concludes this stage of the ceremony which has lasted from morning until late afternoon. The afternoon. The next day is observed as one during which no work may be done (in Laotian *kham tan*). In the evening a rattan cable is produced, the medium again falls into a trance, and in front of the shrine for the ancestors Nyeu a ritual rope-pulling takes place. There are two camps: males at the head of the rope and females at the tail end. It is important that the female side wins as the country will know "prosperity".

The buffalo sacrifice in Vientiane takes place some time during May or June, at the beginning of the rainy season, at a Vietnamese temple which has been built on the site of a shrine, called *ho nia*, not far from where the old city pillar (*thak*) or *met* is situated. This is the *ho nia* of the well if of the whole country and when the sun rises in the east it is still half red. So it is the sun that represents the rank contribute materially and socially to attend the process. A table of offerings is prepared with a mat and some cushions at the foot. A small mat is spread on a flat stone and the *ho nia* stand on it and a third pitcher filled with alcohol at the base. Also there are a copper gong, a drum,

\* C. Archambault, "Le *laang du ho devata luong & Luong Prabang", p. 246.*

\*\* These details and other information on the Vientiane ritual are taken from P. Levi, "The Sacrifice of the Buffalo and the Forecast of the Weather in Vientiane", *Kingdom of Laos* (edited by R. de Berval), *Société Financière*, 1959, pp. 162-73.

This sacrifice was performed every year before the transplantation of rice. Every three years another buffalo sacrifice was performed at the That Luang for the desecration of the earth". See C. Archambault, "Le sacrifice du bœuf à l'autel du Tat Luong (Wieng-Chan), *Ethnos*, Volume 40, 1973, pp. 114-49.

Sabines and a tiger. This will be followed by drums and gongs. At the sixth hour, the *Na* comes to do the sacrifice. He sacrifices his body to the gods. He is crystallized. From that day the body is used to be killed at the altar of a tree or a tree. But in the morning it is known that even a *Na* lets herself be possessed by a *phi* and in all the company of the *phi* she executes a few steps of a traditional dance. At noon in the afternoon she orders the body to be killed. After in some tall trees small flowers has been made at the foot of the big tree where the animal which died in the head, then on the neck. The *Na* takes several small pieces. Head and tail are carried to a nearby shrine containing a sacred stone which later will be used for divination. The rest of the body is left near the table. Most of the meat is cooked and served to the *Na* and this will be eaten by the medium. The spirit possess the *Na* who keeps silent during the eating in the afternoon. People can also do this concerning possible future events. At about two o'clock the *Na* is flushed down three shares going to the medium and the *Na* who serves the *Na*. Hair and tail will form part of the *Na* as well. A white cloth will be folded between her and the *Na*. At an end a quarter of rice to the *Na* and a portion of rice goes to the shrine which has the same stone. Offerings are made to the spirit of the stone. It is washed three times at one, and then covered with water from a teapot. If no drops of water escape rush toward they. If the stone turns it around, and wash the bottom surface. Special attention is given to the one who carries off the under surface have become wet and which remained dry for the stone may be red. It were a sign of the region. In this manner it can be seen whether or not a good chance of plentiful water and a harvest prepare or not ready. It is during the coming season. A further experiment is done to see whether or not had rains can be expected. So soles are placed in rice wine containers and peeled out again. If on the moisture signs of the blades there will be plentiful rain, if much remains clinging to the metal, rain will be withheld.

The *Na* sacrifice at *Va* *Pao* in southern Laos occurs on the fourth day of the waxing moon in the sixth Lao-Tai month which usually falls in May.<sup>45</sup> Reportedly it is an ancient custom going back to a time long ago when the king sent sacrifice two human beings. The buffalo is a substitute for the humans with which the spirits we have to be sacrificed. Before the shrine two parties go to the place where the invisible servants of the great spirits will receive the *Na*. Beside the shrine an elephant post is erected. Its purpose is to enable the chief spirits to tether their heavenly mounts. As soon as the chief priest, the medium and their assistants have arrived, candles are lit in the altar on the elephant post and on the central beam of the shrine itself. Mats and pillows are laid out as a welcome post to the *Na*'s *phi*. The pots and drums are sounded whilst the medium exorcishes starting with the unseen spirits by the wine bottle numbered five. To a huk. As soon as a *phi* has entered his body the *Na* behaves in the following manner if the particular spirit has descended. A female medium also becomes possessed. A *Na* - *Na* is performed. One by one spirit descend and disappear to make way for new ones. At

<sup>45</sup> These details have been taken from *Buddhism in the Kingdom of Laos*, C. Archambault, "The Sacrifice of the *Na*", pp. 156-61.

In other private moments the priest offers the acts of the festival as sacrifices which he writes. Some of these are simple offerings, but others are more elaborate and involve the building of a small shrine or altar. This is against the sacred tree. An offering is made to the tree. The blood of a bull is offered near the tree. The hand of a goat is given to the priest. The postscript in which the animal is offered is always for the future and so is the state of the land. There is also a ritual to last year. On the day of the ceremony all the offerings are burnt in the Mekong. We wash the offerings." The meat is burnt and thrown at various places to the *phi* before it is consumed by the people.

These three examples suffice to demonstrate the basic outline of the great ritual system. It is clear that the religious calendar will affect all the entries. At the same time there are many other ceremonies which are less well known. One such is the *Chanthaburi*. In this assessment of the *Chanthaburi* we find that the priest has been able to relate this to the *Chanthaburi* race. He has also drawn up a very good sketch of a "cosmological map" of parts of Laos. The rituals around the twelfth month, in Archambault's view, form a neat conclusion of those held earlier in the year. They represent the coming of the new year and the start of the cycle again. For this reason his book Archambault *La course de pirogues* is also a study of the spirit of the year. The sacrifice of the *phi* at the beginning of the year has been grafted.<sup>20</sup>

Hopefully I have been able to do some justice to this scholar whilst attempting to summarise a difficult book in a short space. In broad lines I am glad to assess that the present volume is a very good one if the themes stressed in this book. The series of publications on the topics which these Laotians are studying and learning from the author may or may not be so connected. Personally I feel that the two sets of rituals may represent quite different sets of beliefs. I do not see the beginning of the year as being the other bank of the river, but rather the two are in a different location. The author does not mention either in later parts of this book.

From the ethnographic accounts it is clear that women in Laos are generally restricted to the house and its compound. They are not allowed outside even in the new year. There is no evidence of the general rule only at Luang Prabang. In Chanthaburi, however, there are women prohibited to enter the inner sanctuary unless they have come to bring the offerings. Most of these offerings are to the ancestral spirits.<sup>21</sup> Of interest for the student of religion is the complete description of a female who is to be sent to the outer sanctum (palace) of the *phi* to be regarded as a slave for the duration of the ritual. She is to remain there until the end of the year. A vertical position in the outer sanctum is to be maintained.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>21</sup> C. Archambault, *La course de pirogues au Laos un complexe culturel*, Asiens Antropos Asia, 1977. In this work there are further

descriptions of buffalo sacrifices (p. 56 sq. and p. 67 sq.) and some illustrations (Plates 25-27).

<sup>22</sup> C. Archambault, "Le buring du bo devata luong à Luong Prabong", p. 274.

the direction of the branches is ominous and a bending inverse to that of the branch speaks disaster. In the light of the findings am most the Assamese Tai there is yet a cult which ought to be reprieved. This concerns the name of Granfather Muat a Louang Prabang which receives special attention once a year in connection with rituals around the city shrine (Tham). At that time there is a great tamhala in of the Granfather Muat shrine. Once every three years during the seventh month (June) there used to be a red dog sacrifice. This red dog was given the name of "golden deer". No further details are available in Granfather Muat other than that he was an old man called "Lord of the earth" (Kao Dang) and that he was considered the ancestor of the Kha aborigines.<sup>23</sup> There is yet another report regarding a dog sacrifice this time it is Louane Kha spirit and also there the dog flesh is also known as "golden deer".<sup>24</sup>

### The Tai Neua

There is a shrinal until the annual great communal sacrifice of the Tai Neua. This is celebrated in honour of the tutelary spirit of the village and the region (Phu Sain) which is identified with the spirit of a chief who has recently died. On this occasion all the guardian spirits of the *nong* are also honoured. Just outside the village is the place of the sacred grove of the village and nearby this grove there is a permanent shrine on stilts. After the village headman has to get up in the late for the sacrifice this shrine is repaired and all inhabitants share in the cost of buying a buffalo. Over all paths leading to the village a thread is strung with a noose attached, stating during which days the community & the few strangers will not be allowed in nor will those from the village be allowed to go out.

The buffalo is killed in front of the shrine and skinned after the animal is driven up. The meat is placed in copper bowls and cooked. All parts including the skin will be consumed. On small earthenware plates small amounts of the different parts of the buffalo will be put and presented to the spirits. There will be a bit of meat, some liver, heart, lung, entrails. The headman will present these parts of the buffalo to other worthies in his ranks, first to the main spirits and then to those of lesser rank. Each of these lesser ranking spirits receives an offering suitable to its taste. He may receive a goat, another animal. He always is presented a hen and another a duck. These sacrificial gifts are left in his shrub for some time so as to give the spirits a chance to accept them. Then the community & perhaps consume the meats and drinks. Some of the meat will be sent back in banana leaf to surrounding communities whose members could not attend. These rituals are solemnly performed and last three days. Amongst the ritual objects items are mentioned

Apart from this great communal festival there are also domestic sacrifices presided over by the chief of the house holding which a few fowls may be killed and offered to the ancestor. The commonly used methods of

<sup>23</sup> C. Archambault, *La course de singes*, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> C. Archambault, "Une cérémonie en l'honneur des génies de la montagne de sei de Ban Bo (Moyen Laos)", in *Structures religieuses lao*, p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> R. Pascual, "Notes sur les rituels de

possession observés à Dong Dok (Vientiane, 1971)", *Bulletin des Amis du Royaume Lao*, Volume 6, 1971, p. 213.

<sup>26</sup> A. Bourliet, "Les Thay", *Anthropos*, Volume 2, 1907, pp. 825-7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 362-3.

city also are the pushing of an egg into a bowl of rice and no one whether it is an old or a young man can tell what it means. It is the TAI who knows the stories between the years and it is he who is perfect to read the message of the unseen powers.<sup>47</sup>

### The Black and the White Tai

According to Maspero, both Black and White Tai celebrate a feast at Phu Muang (where it is also known). It is the most important ceremony of the year. At Muang there is a big tree in the middle of a sacred area where the people come to break the branches. It is similar to the main village of a town. This custom — called "Pai Muang" takes place in the first month of the Tai calendar which corresponds with July-August. This is the time of the beginning of the rainy season new caves<sup>48</sup> (Dong) are the seats of the powers of visibility depicted as the Black and White Tai. The White Tai, Pai Tai, is even more than his brother, standing like a mountain in Phu Muang. At first these occasions in April-May in the south in early May each year corresponds with September October. The rest of these days is seen as the ruling year here with the Naga who is asked to bring rain and make the rice fields grow successfully. Let us now return to Banan's retreat.<sup>49</sup> In Muan's account after his ascension he is said to have invited the gods of heaven and earth are invited. During it, the territory of the muang is settled by the Tai. Tai is invited and the road made for him as well as his offerings. Food and drink are placed on a platter with rice, alcohol and betel nut under the big tree. At Muang Ban Lao says he wants to thank the spirit who has made him a man to the tree where the spirit lives.<sup>50</sup> The man who has made him a man is asking for three sacrifices to the tree. He says the appropriate length of prayers and the times of the day and against the dangers. It is clear from the account of the offering of sacrifices which are the basis of the prayer that all sacrifices are done. Muan's name of the tree is heaven. Po Then and so I suppose were heaven in various ways. In addition there is the name of the tree after the year, he is the sun and the moon. These are the celestial sacrifices. For example the processes of the earth, of the moon and of the stars, the gods of the waters, the phu Muang, etc. etc. etc. In short, such sacrifices were made after a general sacrifice. These offerings are heavy because the offerings from all these are taken to ask for a black and dry crop, peace and wealth etc.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-22

<sup>48</sup> These details are taken from H. Maspero, *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises*, Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1971, pp. 249-52. This seems to be also the source for Zago's account of the Phu Muang sacrifice of the Black Tai, for he includes Maspero's doubtful translation of *tak senu* as a place for depositing cloth. See M. Zago, *Rites et cérémonies en milieu boudhiste lao*, Rome: Università Gregoriana,

1972, p. 185. In my opinion the word *senu* is more likely to refer to "gau dan" spirit.

<sup>49</sup> Le Capitaine Silvestre, "Les Thais Blancs de Phong-The", *Bulletin de l'École Francaise d'Extrême-Orient*, Volume 18, 19-8, pp. 50-51.

<sup>50</sup> H. Deydier, *Lokapato*, p. 333.

P. L. "The Sacrifice of the Buffalo".

<sup>51</sup> H. Maspero, *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises*, pp. 249-52

### The Red Tai

Every year the Red Tai sacrifice a pig or a small buffalo, or a pig sausages. They practice this sacrifice at the beginning of the Pheung or rice-planting season, and it is the first of the sacrifices of the year. They are presented simultaneously with the offerings to the Phu Mawang (or the mountain spirits) and to the mountain spirit (the mountain guardian). Near the mountain spirit of the rice fields).<sup>43</sup>

Most of Red Tai are engaged in agriculture and magical healing practices. Few are by occupation a surviving set of customs, with which however they are quite unfamiliar. After analysis, but this country has probably the simplest folk belief. Yet there are a few ritual deities that have Red Tai magical customs which are kept to the present day. Among the Red Tai there are a class of healers who rely upon spiritual contact with the spirit world and maintain contact by offering animal sacrifices and by the use of talismans to fall into a trance. These priests consist of a lay class who are provided with a number of cups, a quantity of wax, some dried flowers, dried roots, dried twigs, dried twigs pointing upwards, a wax tray, a cloth, a tray of incense, a tray which is surrounded by small dried twigs, flowers, dried roots, a twig of wood and some cotton thread known as a "talisman" made of wax, a few silver bracelets and a red cloth. According to legend the number of cups and small vases may be from one to twelve, the greater number being reserved for the more important cases. To start with the tray stands upright and a meat offering must be given. On the first occasion, whereby a "tray of twelve" (khuapong) with twelve cups and twelve candles is given, a buffalo may be sacrificed.<sup>44</sup>

On every three years a practicing medicine healer must give a large feast for his more contact in the spirit world, and on this occasion he invites his colleagues. This ceremony is quite distant from the communal ritual described above, as the only existing the deities aspects of the Red Tai pantheon are removed. The inhabitants of his village (his patients) help with the preparation. In the middle of the room on either side a large bamboo mat is spread upon which is made of wax and thread, such as flowers, miniature birds, flowers and birds are hung. There also is a "tray of twelve" and a pig's sausages. During the opening, a priestless the spirits of the ancestors, the guardian spirits, fairies and sprites, those of the mountains, forests, streams, and animals are invited to attend. The great heavenly spirit comes down by four main routes and elephants and express the same with the help of various mountain leaders in trance. These lead in the horses, dogs, monkeys, deer and the bull to inspect it. The healer, after the offering of the sacrifice, the healing techniques has been used, and the exorcist passes on and it is to. In that the person who has been possessed carries the pig sausages to the mountain spirits and Father Feng. In what follows the negotiations

<sup>43</sup> R. Robert, *Notes sur les Try Ding de Mémoires No. 1, Hanoi: Imprimerie Long Chanh (Thanh-hop-Annam), Institut d'Extreme-Orient, 1941, p. 80.*  
*Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme,* <sup>44</sup> *Ibid., p. 68.*

with the various powers for a promise of continued support for the fest so that the latter may continue his medical practice.<sup>67</sup>

Another Tai rite is Rej Tat cast - a two divination techniques have been encountered. The first consists of placing an egg verdesc in a bowl of rice and throwing some of the rice over the egg predicting before hand whether one or two grains will remain on top. The other which is used before going out hunting, consists of examining a sacrificed fowl's right foot. The diviner looks for the position of the 'blood point'. If it lies at one of the joints it bodes evil, but if it lies under a fleshy part it indicates success. The place where the 'blood point' can be found indicates also what type of game will be shot. A final item of interest for this research is the informal - in that a rite which the Rej Tat may involve the drinking of chicken's blood mixed with alcohol.<sup>68</sup>

### **The Chuang**

It is an ancient Chinese rite about the Chuang it has been reported that these practice wild hunting of which they possess eighteen types. Bamboo rods which are straight and close to the chicken bone predict good fortune but those which are curved and far from the bone indicate bad luck.<sup>69</sup> There is little doubt that this conveys a somewhat garbled account of the technique of pushing a very small bamboo nail into a fowl's thigh bones described in Chapter 3. In addition it is mentioned that during the making of an alliance wine and meat are offered, and sometimes a dog may be killed.<sup>70</sup>

### **The Nhang**

A single source provides a vague glimpse into customs amongst the Nhang which may be related to the already noted above. Abbie reports that certain Nhang villages have guardian spirits in whose honour great ceremonies are organised at various times. These feasts last from three to six days depending upon the village and during the celebrations the villagers are not allowed to leave their village. The roads consist of offerings and feasts. The village is an isolated terrain for strangers, and all access roads carry warnings stating until when it is closed.<sup>71</sup>

For other eastern groups only a few vague reports have thus far been encountered which indicate that these also have a sacrificial tradition. Thus, the Tha in China sacrifice fowls and pigs and they worship directly at unroofed shrines at spots considered sacred.<sup>72</sup> The Chung Chia perform offerings in front of trees, which they believe to be 'spirit trees'.<sup>73</sup> Such remarks clearly fit in with what has been observed for other Tai groups. They also indicate the need for detailed ethnographic reports.

<sup>67</sup> For further details, see pp. 73-75.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>69</sup> Johnson Ling, *Recherches ethnographiques sur la race Yao dans l'Asie du Sud-est*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1929, p. 109.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>71</sup> M. Abbie, *Les races du Haut Tonkin de Phuynghao et Longton*. Paris, Société d'Ethnographie, Mémoires et Coloniales, 1924, p. 91.

<sup>72</sup> W. C. Dodd, *The Tai Rites*, p. 149.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

## Analysis

### a) The annual communal sacrifice

The traditional Tai calendar is closely linked with the agricultural calendar. A number of sacrifices may be considered to be of this type, but I will limit this chapter to one which is typical of the northern type. There is said to be a sacrifice at the beginning of the year. The Khamyang Ruey Daeng (Red Phu Muang) and the Ruey Suan Muang (the Ruey Phu Muang) are held in January by Phu Muang tribes to celebrate Grandparents Day. This is an event which occurs in spring or early summer. Then, and the New Year sacrifice of the Tais, is the Phu Muang. During the Phu Muang ceremony, a Youthful Phu Muang tribe make a Grandparents Sae Ruey offering to their ancestors. This is the first of the New Year sacrifices. In northern Thailand, the Tais' *pu* rituals, the annual New Year Pu Sae, the offering in honour of Phu Muang amidst Black, White and Red Tai, may also seem to be variations on a single theme. They are all carried out in honour of the community at large, take place at specific times during the year, the same type of food is served, the people taking part may be intermixed, but these events take place in different geographical areas and all involve similar sacrifices.

Religious activity in the Lao area is considerably variable following the calendar, but with one exception the annual festival is held in the winter months. Black Tai and its group (Khamyang, Ahom, Rue Yuan Tai of north-eastern Thailand, Rue Wai, Rue Tai, Rue Chao) have their main calendar in the winter months of May or June. The second group (Khamyang, Rue Wai, Rue Chao) holds its annual festival in September, October or November, but this concerns a repeat performance of the one held earlier in the year. The exception occurs in the Black and some of the White Tai who hold the ceremony in the middle of the rainy season, in July-August. Many reasons are given for this, and White Tai explains this peculiar timing by pointing out that Black Tai have a rather aberrant calendar and therefore sometimes do not know when their New Year

comes. It has been suggested that the sacrifice on April-May or June depends on the date when the rainy season begins. The rainy season is imminent. This interval varies but is stressed generally by the fact that no often downpours and it is necessary to find a time when the coming season will be guaranteed to start. And the rains will be good. The explanation of the calendar is as follows: Rue Tai say of the manner in which they hold their annual festival (Khamyang Lao), of the places where they do not hold it (Khamyang and Rue Chao), and of the places where a new calendar is used. This last element says nothing about the date of the festival, but states that the date when it will develop. Sometimes a more exact statement is given, so that what lies in store is used. The Khamyang Ahom say that in the question the gods directly on Earth, as well as various other persons have gone into trance. On two occasions the Rue Chao have said that the war was held during the annual sacrifice. This annual festival of war is probably a continuation of the tradition now described in Volume I.

whereby a coffin with the corpse of a famous Buddhist monk — probably and thus of the era at a glancing. Two remarkable features of war — even more widespread than that of the Tai. Apart from the two cities mentioned above whereby the Tai Twa had attacked them to exact some sort of tribute they are sometimes held as a separate ritual (Pakha) or often they are attached to the New Year celebration themselves. In all these cases the tug-of-war is held between a men's and a women's team, and unless it is considered a good omen when the women's team wins. There is little doubt that the men's side is really a ceremony for obtaining rain.<sup>2</sup> When they are called Tai with their Mating sacrifice these days of war seem to have lost the seasonal character of the ceremony. In this case it could be regarded as an extension of the drama in questing techniques in order to decide over whether the rains will begin. By letting the women win the game of rope pulling the chances of plentiful rains are improved.

The general character of the ceremonial activities may thus be described as a joint effort to make contact with the mountain guardian spirits and other members of the Tai pantheon to present these spirits with some of their favorite foods and drink, and to persuade them to do their best and let the season be good. After these offerings, when the priests have been examined the questions are through questioning the gods perhaps the farmers have at least a idea of what to expect. Since the beginning of the monsoon is a crucial time in the yearly cycle of work this ceremony has assumed the tree growths, the character of an annual ritual. Yet it is an occasion of overturning a tradition in the traditional religious cycle. Even in regions where the farmers under influence of new developments, are in the process of abandoning the sacrifice they will take it up again in a year when the rains are exceptionally late. In other cases the sacrifices have been continued also because many Tai fear that the gods may deeply resent being suddenly denied. Oftentimes when they have become accustomed. Any calamity which would occur was seen where recently the sacrifice has been stopped would be interpreted as the result of the god's wrath.

Whilst there is therefore little doubt that the large-scale communal sacrifice is apparently connected with the beginning of the monsoon this does not account for the few cases where a second sacrifice is held later in the year. This may very be meant here that at least for the rituals in Laos Archambault has states the reason that these may be the sacrifices of the first sacrifices, at least when seen from the perspective of the heat festival. The rituals in April, May and June consist of the rising of the waters in all ponds and rivers, and the September October or November sacrifice is intended to make the waters withdraw and to prepare for the harvest. A similar account has been reported for the White Tai of Lai Chau. It is a neat interpretation which may reflect the thinking of some Tai and White Tai ritual specialists yet it is not clear which I authorise. A similar quite logical picture could be set up by "explaining" that the first set of rituals

<sup>2</sup> Three researchers who have given "Long Prabang", p. 248, and F. Pouétsch through on the relation between the Mating and the tug-of-war. The tug-of-war and rain making are known, C. Schoppert, Volume 1, Paris, Mission in "Notes about the Tai", p. 89, Archivum 1962, pp. 76-77.

from the request for a good season and the second ritual represents the gods' reward at the year's end. It is interestingly associated with the second type of sacrifice, a more formal type of sacrifice, which may have been a cultic rite of some importance in itself. I suspect that there is a relationship between the two which supports such a basic substratum.

In my opinion the first of these would be a typical ceremony to be held late in the year before the true Lanna New Year was held in August and October and November. This can be deduced by the fact that the April New Year is of Indian origin and that this has spread to mainland Southeast Asia during the last two millennia. However as will be described in the second part of this book the Ancient Tai calendar began its year much later. It could be argued that this derives from a region where a northern monsoon dominated the agricultural seasons. In this view the original Tai sacrifice used to be held around October or November. When the Tai spread over mainland Southeast Asia where a southern monsoon dominates most of them changed their timing of the yearly greatest ritual to suit the seasons and a few retained the old date.

The ritual details vary somewhat from place to place something that may be expected for peoples scattered over such a wide region. Despite this there are broad areas of agreement also with regard to the objects and paraphernalia used. The gifts to the guardian spirit of the *mawang* must be lavish. They consist of rice sweets, alcohol, beverage and meat. The animal's blood has an important role in the sacrifice often it is carefully collected and separately presented on the altar. Almost everywhere one or more bullocks are considered an appropriate gift only in the smallest and more isolated villages is a pig considered sufficient. The killing is always carried out near the altar often in the vicinity of a large tree which is considered to be specifically connected with the Phu Maeng. Sometimes the chief sacrificial animal is actually tied on to such a tree.

There seems to be no generally accepted favorite colour for the main sacrificial animal. Some sacrifice white others a black others again both white and black, and in one instance a brown coloured beast. In all instances however it is stressed that the animal must be a beautiful specimen. In one instance the sacrificial animal was old sick or deformed. Substitution is not allowed apparently the gods cannot be fooled in that respect. It is the vigour and power of the beasts which make the gifts so attractive in the eyes of the gods.

The use of ritual poles or masts presents an interesting puzzle. The Akhom have a *khot lak* near the altar for the most important deity as well as a pole with many lamps for Do Maling Pao Ra where the sacrificial animals are presented. The La have an 'al shot lak' as well as an 'elephant post'. The Hla Kaid White Tai a *lak sem* and the Red Tai also use a mast with presents a tall one during their largest ceremony to contact the gods, as well as a large candle in the cases where the gods descend. On first sight the Akhom *khot lak* may have been used as the place to tether an elephant for sacrifice. After all it is called a pole for tethering elephants. It is halfway down which can be used for that purpose and at present a carved elephant may actually be tied to that ring. There are some misgivings regarding this view of the purpose of the *khot lak*. In the

first place all sacrificial animals are kept in pens at night, some of them in the *khot lak* and all are present in the *tar* during the *Tai Malong*. Phu Ra. Secondly it was in ancient times believed that no one by men can be so foolish as to hold an elephant. A solution to both these problems is suggested by the custom according to which wooden posts are erected for the sacred purpose. These are the *tar* or stable mounts. Apparently the *A-* and *Tai* customs have the same function and no living elephants were ever tied to the *tar* next to the dwelling.

The array of posts may be above an hundred but the two types. The first one is always the post with no tail, serving as the head only steeds. The other type is a post with a tail, the *ta*. It has many steeds presents are fastened. It means that it is the *ta* that has heavenly powers descent to earth. It can handle a thousand steeds and the can fly eight thousand miles. It is the *ta* that carries the "immortal twin pole" made of wood to stand on the *Shan* or east. A Shanman guest has a right to a place on the *ta* when in his world. However, in the *Tai* rituals customs, where the *ta* to whom does not leave the earth at all, in the centre of the *ta* he is seated. Their respective heads the *giant* *five* who have descended from the "immortal pole" and have tied their mounts on the tethering pole.

Another ritual detail which gives me some variants are studied aross *Tai* cults is the use of the *ta* in *shans* that is to say during the *umphu* ritual. These posts cover a distance of half a pole to the main altar and spread out over several acres. Hence the *ta* but these are related to the various *Tai* bands and tribes throughout the world in Laos, as well as in *Yunnan* and other parts of China, as well as amongst the far majority groups in the *Vietnam*. As far as there are variations in the use of presenting values, the *ta* is found in their wide spread it would seem that the *ta* band only take the strongest link to being regarded as an Ancient *Tai* symbol of wealth.

Whilst in this matter I could do is try to sketch and explain and even provide a list of what may have been an Ancient *Tai* cult in the *umphu* of the *shans*. This is at least an first sight quite possible as it is the case in the *Tai* cult. It has been noted that the *ta* is also called *ta* or *ta* for the welfare. I hardly know why we uses the word *ta* for words than the guardian spirits etc. This was also strange as after the *umphu* reflects upon the size of the *ta* in *shans* Apart from the *A-* case we can see again that a *ta* in *shans* *Tai* cults may be a *ta* and intend to differentiate the *ta* of the *Tai*, the *Naga*, the *Black Tai*, the *White Tai* and *Red Tai*. I never fully understood these differences but the *ta* in *shans* is not a good analysis possible. For example the *ta* *Naga* is a *ta* in the first important series of *ta* and *ta* is a *ta* to the *ta* *waters* each according to its last. In the *shans* *ta* *waters* will be *ta* in the *umphu* of the *A-* *shans*. It is difficult to make a list of the various powers of the *ta* *waters* as such but it may have been possible to assess whether the *ta* *waters* acts like *A-* *shans*, the *Tai* *shans* and *ta* *waters*. In *shans* *Mahayana* *Buddha* the *ta* in the *Black and White Tai* *shans* is a *ta* *waters*. Hence *ta* *waters* *ta* in

which powers are invoked and those called by Po Tseen Luong gods. This is run fairly smoothly and clearly, and the Red Tai Macayng and his subordinates such as the White Tai Macayng and the Black Tai Macayng, are mentioned. It is possible in the here cited text that the Red Tai Macayng is the same as the Three Ancient Beasts who are mentioned earlier in the text. Then a series of powers called 'Tao' are mentioned. These are the 'Imperial Gods' who are also called the Three Tai Gods in the text. Again it is not clear what the last Chinese in the text means but it can be taken to mean the Ancient traditional pantheon of gods, and does it correspond with that of the Tai minority groups in northern Vietnam. The only names and positions readily comparable are the Ahm and Lieng Don and the White and Black Tai god Po Thien Lung. The Tao word Lieng may well mean 'great', if 'royal'. Po Tseen Luong is also known as Po Tien by the Red Tai<sup>14</sup> and as Phanya Tren or Fa Kuan in Laos.<sup>15</sup> Distortion in the titles such as Po probably stems from Tai (tao) and Phanya (or Fa) being earlier Tai title which may be translated here as 'Lord') we begin the series Don and Then Lung. It would have to be seen whether the two words were related. The identification and detailed description of other powers in the Tai pantheon is a task which still needs to be performed. On first sight this will be a very fruitful field for detailed comparison which may eventually throw light upon the Ancient Tai perception of the environment.

Another line of investigation which presents itself when the Tai culture and sacrifices are surveyed is the importance of trance in traditional Tai religion. In the materials held above it has been noted how the Ahm, the Khansane, the Siwase, the Lai and the Red Tai have a respectable place and a special role for the spirit medium who may receive one or more of the spirits in his or her body. The instant nad sed rule of the spirit in form much weaker than even the above cited authors would suggest. During my own fieldwork in central Thailand several times people were encountered who were regularly the vehicle of a spirit-spirit. One man acted as the vehicle for a long deceased rank for whom a shrine had been erected near the outskirts of a village. Another woman had a well established relationship with a spirit whom she identified as a younger relative of the deceased Phu Mueang. She had made a big altar at home and for a suitable hom tabum, let herself be possessed whenever individuals waited advice from the powers. Similar practices are also very popular among the Yuan where regularly a large number of spirit red robes appear.<sup>16</sup> A pattern spanning Tai people from west to east exists and it may be assumed that aspects of this go back to the time when the Tai formed still a relatively homogeneous culture.

Another ubiquitous is the custom of listing the village during the ritual sacrifice. This were all men. Foreigners are not allowed to enter nor are women. The latter is often hard to believe. There is no doubt that this custom is not only recent. I cite the fact that the

<sup>14</sup> Robert Neumann, *The Ethnography of the White Dzao*, Göttingen, 1970; Alexander von Humboldt, *Structure religieuse des peuples de l'Asie du Sud-Est*, Berlin, 1850, pp. 110 and p. 115.

<sup>15</sup> J. Ziegert, 'The White Dzao', in: *Die Ethnographie der Südostasien*, Hamburg, No. 112, 1972, pp. 79-85.

sacrifices which are here analysed are intended for the whole community. For the Juranian of the ceremony the village becomes a sacred place and its holiest place just next to where the people live. Besides the proper place where gods may be received that is why present actors such as labour in the fields and servants do not enter the Assamese Tal concept *kam* which serves to indicate the state of separation is actually related to the *lakam*. Separation methods are used to indicate separation. Two different methods have been described in order to indicate the end of the world that the community is in such a state of isolation. One is the use of white cotton threads strung over the entrance to a house with a written message attached stating the duration of the prohibition. A second Tal method consists of the talon or talon-like symbol made with a thread (*Khamveng*). A third way consists of the use of red ribbons usually called *tur*. This symbol is identical to a *tau*-symbol. These peoples (Shan, Lao, Yunn, Siamese, La and Ruk) have adopted this symbol a fairly early time in their history. However the symbolism of this symbol does not seem to indicate any of the urban styles of *tau* or *tal*.

Finally there are two accounts Kha-vang and Lee. It is strict prohibition on women to attend the ceremonial sacrifice. It has been indicated that the *Khamveng* may have had this aspect relative to Lee as a result of events that took place after the *Le* in their migration to Assam. For the *Lee* there is no information available concerning the prohibition. In theory a case could be built up in such a way that the *Khamveng* and *Tau* represent nothing more than a general custom among them to general exclusion of women. It will be recalled that especially in the Yuan region it is not an offence for women to sit on the platform which marks as far back as the 13th century. Indeed there is a strong tradition of keeping women from the day a charged she is.<sup>14</sup> In *La* it has been reported that unless they have some ritual to perform women might not be in the same room as the God of death *Nuda*. However it would be false to conclude the present discussion about separating out that there are many *La* groups especially rural ones that do not prohibit women who by necessity prohibitions are too, and were as far as by no means barred from attending the community's most sacrosanct ritual. In *La* it has also been noted that women are not barred from the shrines during other *pant* cults. All either the evidence reveals that the *Khamveng* and *Lau* from the exception cases. It is quite possible that some of the exclusion is the result of the influence of Hinduism a creed which is rather male oriented.

### b) Human sacrifices

In the overview there are several accounts of the people offering humans. Two groups (Afro and Siamese) have to burn the dead amongst the offerings during a royal funeral. This very well represents a local extension of the general law of man sacrifice as an offering but in order to turn them into gifts to the spiritual souls described. A local *Tal* sacrifice

<sup>14</sup> B. J. Tamm, *Mon. and Min. of Siamese Migrat.* No. 24, London  
4m., F.R.L. m. Ceylon, 1910, Vol. 1 Pres. H. C. D. 1910  
Thailand, Scandinavian Institute of Asian

Such an offering has also been reported for the Shan and the Siamese. This tradition seems to be a general typical of a local development rather than a transfer of one from other cultures. The custom may have originated in the stories of the foundation sacrifices under the reign of King Meng-tsun who has been reported for the Yuan Tai Nation of Laos. It is unlikely that such great sacrifices belong to the Akha culture, because in vanous accounts of rituals around the world there are more traditional Tai groups. There are none describing a sacrifice greater than the sole. Finally there are a few accounts of human sacrifice to appease a specific spirit. Every year the Ahom killed a young man or two in Mac Lea. The Siamese may regularly have sacrificed four young women in order to satisfy a spirit if no near a lake and there is a recent northern Lao that formerly the kings sacrificed one male and one female. The author states when now substituted for this. These three are all in no form a pattern. It has been shown how the Ahom kings did not follow the Ph. Mi. They follow after the model of an older, local cult and under the influence of a specific type of Hinduism. The remaining two cases are rather vague accounts and unspecific. They do not show any similarity to each other with respect to the type of spirit to whom the offering is intended. It is quite possible that such sacrifices did occur but if this were the case the practice seems to represent some isolated developments. Therefore it is not warranted with the information at hand, to imagine them in the most extensive type of tribal non-Tai religion.

### c) The range of victims

Domestic animals are foremost among those chosen to be presented to the gods. It is to be fully expected that some people let their livestock be easily and readily available. Also many animals are used for a part of the diet of these peoples. After the spirits have accepted their presents, all the fruits, the rice, the cakes, the sweets and the meats are consumed by those who have come to celebrate the ritual.

The Siamese appear to be quite consistent in what they regard as suitable gifts for the unseen powers. During a small ritual one or more fowls or a duck is a proper present. A communal sacrifice requires at least a pig. A bullock is regarded amongst the Lao as the gift which is most pleasant to the greater gods. During a large community offer, when a differentiation is made between various recipients it is found that the great heavenly powers share the choice offerings and various other categories of powers obtain goats, pigs, fowls, ducks, peacocks and fowls. The range of animals considered suitable for sacrifice was even further extended in two instances, namely in the Akha area, in which bone and elephant diseases, where brown swans, a scimitar, deer, fish, rat, tree and earthworms are mentioned, and in the Siamese custom, in which blue crabs, horse-shoe crabs and a bamboo rat are cited. These types of unusual preseriptons must be regarded as being to a very special of proceeding ritual. They do not appear to be shared by the general populace.

Dog sacrifices were a usual portion of the ritual and they deserve further attention. In the classic period there were seven separate occasions on which dogs were killed and to these seven an eighth can be

still added. The Ahom give white dogs in the "earth" section of the offering, and on a d Tarent occasion during the former state ceremony for Lat Lung Khan, a power closely connected with disease, they killed a red dog. The third case occurs amongst the Phakey who sacrificed and ate a red dog in case there was an epidemic which showed no signs of abating. The fourth are the Nua, who throw a log into the fire which then causes the village to burn down. The fifth is a red dog offer by the Lao for Grand master M. et. One of the spirits in the Neua pantheon is provided with a dog during the great annual sacrifice. The Chuang kill a dog at an oath-taking sacrifice. Finally, amongst the Red Tai hunting rituals there is the killing of a dog for Phi Khong who is asked to intervene with the evil disease causing spirits on behalf of the patient.<sup>7</sup> From all these separate cases it appears that there is a widespread pattern which may go back to A. et Tai culture. This concerns the relation between a dog sacrifice and the warding off of threats.

On one of the occasions when a dog is prescribed the white colour is considered best but in four cases this colour is specified as red. It is possible that the preference for red reflects simply the fact that Southeast Asian tribes have a reddish colour that in traditional Tai villages, using a black or a white dog might prove rather dull. On the other hand it is also possible that this red colour is, in some oblique fashion, related to the fact that a dog sacrifice is ritually known in Laos as the sacrifice of a "golden deer". Also amongst the Yuan there is an ancient mystical connection between dog and "golden deer".<sup>8</sup> The source of the reference cannot be further pursued with the limited amount of material now at hand but it will be taken up again after the information from surrounding cultures has been surveyed.

#### d) *Divination techniques*

A variety of divination practices have been encountered when studying the link between the animal sacrifices and the beginning of the rainy season. Some of these practices have been encountered for Tai groups which have not recently been in contact, though the geographical spread is not as wide as to strongly suggest an Ancient Tai custom. These are the custom of examining the animal's liver for any tears or fissures that in which may bode ill (Ahom, Khaoyang and Lu Lai) and the examination of the position of a fowl's tongue bone (Ahom, Siamese, Tai, S'angtheast Thai and Laotians). Another intriguing combination is the account of fowls' thigh bone divination amongst the Ahom and the report on a similar custom for the Chuang.

Less widespread are the reports on taking the direction in which a ritual animal falls or the direction of the blood flow as indicators of how the coming season will be (Lue and Laos). Similarly, the number of grains which remain in an egg (Neua and Red Tai) have only been found thus far for peoples who have had opportunity to hear of and learn from each other. Other divination practices, such as seeing whether the yolk is visible through the egg white (Lao of northeast Thailand), the pouring of water over a holy stone (Lao), the dipping of swords in water (Lao) and the

<sup>7</sup> R. Robert, *Notes sur les Tay Deng*, <sup>8</sup> C. Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Volume I, p. 71. pp. 3-10.

examination of a few's foot (Red Tai) represent but single instances and do not correspond to any unitary tradition marking either the past or the present. But they represent earlier developments, or possibly relatively recent borrowings with a neighbouring culture.

### e) Oaths of allegiance

An interesting sub-issue which emerged from the ethnographic survey is the description of some oath-taking rituals. Among chiefs dipped their swords in chicken's blood and drank some of it whilst swearing a truce with a neighbouring tribe. The Yuan king swore allegiance to a king by taking blood mixed with alcohol. The Red Tai who makes a formal oath may have drunk chicken's blood mixed with alcohol. The Chuang drink alcohol and eat meat on such occasions. In most of these instances there seems sufficient similarity to recognise a shared tradition. Since the geographical spread of the reported customs is extremely wide, it may well offer itself for inclusion in the Ancient Tai tradition. A further study of this material, considering details such as the actual texts of the oaths may throw further light on this matter. In that case it would be interesting to include the Siamese custom of swearing oaths reported in some of the earlier inscriptions, as well as the custom of the Siamese of drinking of the water of the "sea of allegiance" which was regularly performed in Siam until the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the chieftains insisted that water be drunk on such an occasion may possibly be related to an Ancient Tai custom of drinking blood and alcohol.

In this chapter various aspects of a common cultural tradition which appears to go back to the time when the Tai had a more homogeneous culture have been established. It does not mean that such aspects must be regarded as uniquely Tai. This may or may not be the case. Before an opinion may be ventured on whether the Tai share some of the Ancient Tai traditions with other people, the ethnographic survey must be extended to include the main surrounding cultures. This is the subject of the following chapter.

<sup>2</sup> H. G. O. Wales, *Siamese State Coronations, Their History and Function*, London, B. Quaritch, 1931, pp. 191-98.

## TAI SACRIFICES IN WIDER PERSPECTIVE.

The study of sacrificial traditions of all the peoples who surround the Tai, and with whom they may have interacted at various periods in history, is an immense task. The Tai are spread widely, from Assam to northern Vietnam and from southern China to southern Thailand. The cultural traditions, with which at least some of the Tai groups have been in contact, cover scores of ethnic groups in Assam, in Burma, in southern China, in northern Thailand, in Laos, in Vietnam and in Cambodia. To give an adequate and fairly complete overview of sacrificial rituals in all these surrounding cultures would involve the king's forces in scores of languages and take years of research in each of the countries mentioned above. All that can be done in the present limited time and with the finite resources available is the scanning of accessible literature and the collecting of information regarding the general types of sacrifices common in the various traditions, as well as noting interesting ritual details which may provide cues as to whether or not Tai customs are related. In this overview of ethnographic literature occasionally valuable descriptions of sacrifices were encountered which have not been incorporated in this volume. Usually these related to local healing rituals or death ceremonies and they were excluded on the grounds that they were not directly relevant to the main themes of this part of the book. In general, the following account has been guided by the Tai sacrificial customs which have been already established above. For the various surrounding cultures, note is taken of which animals are killed, which rules are observed during the communal sacrifices, and what divination techniques have been reported. In accordance with the pattern set in Volume I, the survey begins to the west and ends in Cambodia.

### a) Assamese lowland peoples

Assamese cultural history is extremely complex. Many different peoples have entered the Brahmaputra Valley and interacted with the cultural groups preceding them. In the lowlands especially, the mixing of a variety of indigenous traditions with various forms of Hinduism has occurred to such an extent that it is difficult to discern the separate strands of beliefs. The Mru, Dophia, Boro, Mechi, Koch Dimasa, Gari and Chutia cultures are some of the important local groupings, but only a few of these have been described in some detail. The situation in the hills is somewhat different. There many traditions appear to have been able to maintain to a much larger extent their own specific character. Therefore the intricate Assamese scene will be dealt with by first noting sacrificial customs in the lowlands, and then moving to the hills.

Apart from the Chutia human sacrifices in honour of Pishasi which have been mentioned in some detail in Chapter 3, there is an account of a ritual human decapitation at Dibrugarh, in what used to be Koch territory. There were two rows of thirty round pillars and two rows of square ones.

Each pillar is supposed to have been the appointed seat of a grandee according to his rank. It is said that every year, on a fixed day, all

the nobles assembled in their houses and a sum of money was given to them by way of sacrifice. This ceremony would be held in the assembly, as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of the Deity.<sup>1</sup> No other information on the sacrificial custom of nobles has been found. Neither the shape of the pillars nor the votives as they are held up in the illustration in Butler's book seem to bear a relation to the culture.

Sacrifices accompany all Garia ceremonies. These comprise rituals for the welfare of the community as well as those to remove anger and calamities and by recurring ceremonies heading price as the year and agricultural trials. The animals selected as sacrifice animals are goats and fowls.<sup>2</sup> Such information bears this study in mind than providing the insight that at least some tribal Assamese peoples other than the Tai had a strongly fixed presentation tradition that the Army, when they first settled in the Brahmaputra Valley, must have followed, so very strikingly different in this respect.

Probably more important for the cultural history is the possible influence of Hindus as from the westernmost Tengnafoti to most Assam eventually affected the Hindu faith and its own ritual. There are several instances of Hinduism with influences are apparent. Besides pigs, goats and cocks may be added to some of the fetishes reproductive and of treasury of life. All this here it is such that the pows might be stained with blood rice offered to them must be eaten with blood, flowers presented to them must be red.<sup>3</sup>

In general however the ritual of most Hindus are recorded as male.<sup>4</sup> Brahmin priests are hardly to kill unless specifically ordered by the rite sacerdotal sacrifices. Only four types of victims may be offered according to texts written back a considerable time namely horse, cow, elephant and man.<sup>5</sup> Of these, the horse sacrifice has been most often described. The victim must be in his prime perfect proportions and may even be a stallion. If it concerns a human sacrifice the victim must also be free of crime. In one iteration of a ceremony the victim is burnt alive a ram is brought unto the assembled priests. It is gashed with a spear and decorated with garlands. Molars are extracted constantly to scare the intent to kill the sacred animal. This process is done usually by beating and wills among the victim. In my way the first sacrifice is called the horse type. When death has ensued, the entrails are removed and roasted over a fire. The rest is skinned and is kept into pieces. One portion is given to the fire others

<sup>1</sup> J. Butler, *Travels and Adventures in the Province of Assam During a Residence of Fourteen Years*, Delhi Vivek Publishing Company, 1978, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> B. Pugh, "The Geros", *Tribes of Assam* (edited by S. Barkakati), New Delhi National Book Trust, 1960, pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, p. 645.

<sup>4</sup> W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, Westminster Constable, 1896, Volume II, p. 312. Crooke mentions that cow sacrifices were common until they were prohibited by the Hindus.

<sup>5</sup> There are some accounts of human sacrifice other than yagnam. In a type of gruesome alchemy, accounts of which are also related in Upper Assam, the first-born son's blood ought to be used in a ceremony reputedly bringing spectacular wealth and power to the sacrificer. This has actually been tried, see *The Indian Antiquary*, Volume II, 1873, pp. 125-26.

<sup>6</sup> Dubois (p. 311) mentions that the horse must be perfectly white, but his editor thinks Dubois is mistaken and it should be black.

fixed in butter and salt and another place and the person who pays for the ceremony can choose either the upper or the lower place and over the chosen spot the victim is killed by being placed by his head on the floor and the body is cut into pieces.

From the above it can be inferred that the *Tal* sacrifice is a *Shiva* ritual and that the *Shiva* cult has been absorbed into the *Tal* cult. The *Tal* sacrifice is also a *Hindu* ritual and its links to the *Hindu* religion are evident from the present Hindu reference. Essentially both those *Ahom* rituals have retained their *Tal* character, however.

### b) Assamese hill peoples

A strong animal tradition has been reported for the Khasi people. In the first place, some Khasi regularly performed ritual killing of humans. Some of them apparently were under the influence of Tantric beliefs and practices, such as the sacrifices at Jaintia, where each autumn humans were killed and thrown into the river or the Kali goddess, and at Nartang where a severed head was thrown down into an underground cleft.<sup>1</sup> There is also a well described tradition of killing humans for the *Thrin*, a water demon living in a cave. Their worship reportedly is passed on in certain families and the shrines of *Thrin* have very extensive (as yet un-described) rituals. If the *Thrin* does not obtain its regular sustenance in the form of human blood, it will do so itself usually as a snake. Draining human blood, there was to be loss of weight or death from a victim and, with the help of sorcery, the victim would grow sick and finally die. Apparently this is a type of organised witchcraft. Annually the *Thrin*'s food (*mat lung* or *oup*) is prepared in an elaborate ceremony but the sequence of events, how it is used and other ritual details have not yet been described.<sup>2</sup>

Of the Khasi ritual stories, that of the male goat is the most important. Great numbers of them are killed during state ceremonies, such as coronation, the prince's king's cremation, the regularly recurring rituals to ensure the state's prosperity and protection and also during family rituals. The cock is the other animal regularly killed. During a coronation, for example thirteen he goats are offered twelve for the twelve main clans and one for the new leader himself. During their preparation the goats have their horns decorated with silver rings. The sacrifice is done with a knife, which has not been used, probably in a wish to diminish the threat entailed for the rest of the weapon.<sup>3</sup> The actual killing is performed in full view, unfearing the solemnity of the moment.<sup>4</sup> At other times during the ritual, goats are beaten, pipes are played and guns are discharged. During the rituals for protection the state goats are killed in a pattern which has been pasted with red soil.

An other ritual element in Khasi sacrificial customs is the *Khasi* oak, of which the bran hairs are always used. There are yearly

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Leibov's *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, p. 510 ff.

<sup>2</sup> B. Pugh, "Khasi", *Traces of Assam*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> H. Barth, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, pp. 356-7.

<sup>4</sup> H. Barth, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, pp. 262-63.

<sup>5</sup> P. R. T. Gordon, *The Khasis*, Delhi: the Khasi People, pp. 262-63.

goat and oxen sacrifices for the god of the sun, the wind, water, life, fate, sky spirits and ancestors. Furthermore before the ceremony may be started, altars are set up in the river bed.

In the most common sacrifice the Khasi and Garo do not use pigs. The goat is used in the Khasi ceremony. It is essential that the head should be severed with one blow. As soon as the head was cut off there was a rush on the part of the sacrificers to see in which direction the head faced. South or east was considered a good omen, north or west was bad.<sup>12</sup>

There is another ritual which is very nearly the same but there is considerable divergence between it and the one just described. It has been established for the Lao and the Tai of Kengtung that they share the custom of offering a whole fowl to the gods. In order to make contact with the gods, the Khasi sacrificer can either offer a fowl because of a different type of altar and consecration, or he can offer what an ancestor expected a nest fowl, i.e. the fowl which his ancestor offered to their ancestors. They cannot use birds because in the Khasi like any comparable tribe they have no cockles for them. Is this a coincidence?

How divergent the two rituals of sacrifice is can be seen in the details of consecration. Both among the Lao and the Khasi a fowl is often used to find out whether some spirit is present or not. If the spirit has actually agreed to accept an offering. And here again the fowls and eggs in consecration. However these are but very few instances. In the details the traditions are also similar. In the Lao tradition a fowl's tendon bone, thigh bone or tail are broken and yolk, may be said to see whether the yolk shines brightly or not. This is followed by oil. The Khasi, on the other hand, first clean the bird's body. Then divide the fowl's large intestines which have two protuberances. Immediately after the bird is killed its bowels are extracted and a few grains of rice distributed over them. The last remains of the viscera are then watched intently in order to see if certain protuberances touch each other or whether they move further apart with respect to the two aforementioned protuberances. These movements are seen as a communication by the spirit with whom contact has been established.

Among the Khasi egg divination has developed to a fine art. The egg is smeared with red earth and then subjected to a consecration board. The egg's contents are smeared on sticks which will be scattered over several pieces of wood. Skilled men can read omens from the actual distribution of the pieces.<sup>13</sup> Another method of egg divination consists of the pressing of two eggs together and in testing if the egg containing the yolk breaks more easily than the other one. If the other one breaks the man is bad. Another common method of divination is to break an egg in the air, or a bowl held up by the man to be tested. A question is asked. If the lime case begins to swell it is taken to mean that the answer must

<sup>12</sup> P. R. T. Gordon, *The Khasis*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>13</sup> After writing this book it was brought to my attention that the Lao of Ban Koa near Vientiane did decorate the horns of two buffaloes (Archambault, personal communication, December 1980).

Becker, "Das Euterwerken der Khasi", *Anthropos*, Volume XII-XIII 1917-1918, pp. 494-96, and Gordon, *The Khasis*, pp. 118-20. The Dophla are reported to use a similar method. See W. Robinson, "Notes on the Dophla", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Volume XX, p. 126 ff.

be interpreted as interrogative. It is movement occurs after asking the question and sacrifice. These comprise the most commonly used methods of divination. At first the question of odds there are some who use a small number of sticks such as those used by the Mayas. These consist of sticks with the number of random sticks, picked up randomly from a bag.

These methods of divination have been described in some detail before. This is an example of how specific the details may prove to be. There are others which have been given in a measure to the two different groups. Although both Tai and Keng Ho do not make any reference to it, at least Alan Hinton<sup>18</sup> gives an example of a divination technique used by that no contact between them. He also describes a bushy cultural feature which passes across the border between Thailand and Laos. A less rough measuring point than the number of sticks which may be a less rough measuring point. Details of these techniques are not so such as to suggest intimate contact.

Other forms of divination are to be found amongst some of the Tai called Naga. This is particularly true of the groups known as Naga. The Naga are said to be the offspring both human and animal. They are Naga because they appear to have a thing in common with them. Among the Tangkhul Naga the most important form of divination are the first of the methods described above. These are not the only ones available but these are the ones that are used. Given a human sacrifice these animals are known. The more the diviner sacrifices describe sacrifices involving stabbings and it is health care more than acts such as that. In such cases, offerings to the ancestors' spirits are not made. According to Chang<sup>19</sup> that there is a never-ending series of sacrifices to be performed at the time of epidemics.<sup>20</sup>

More can be available to the divination rituals. In order to find out if someone has a sickness he consulted the diviner places a raw egg with his lips directly on a stalk of chaff. The chaff is set alight and the diviner looks at the smoke. The direction of the smoke which comes from the stalk which remains in the shell are examined and interpreted. According amongst the Ao Naga state into a burning stalk with firewater or water for omens regarding the future. As soon as the tear drops fall to the ground the omens and observe the direction of the flames. A piece of ginger may be broken and the pieces on the surface used to tell the future.<sup>21</sup> Chang

<sup>18</sup> P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khants*, pp. 118-20. A somewhat similar method, using a ball of rice on a string has been described for the Tai in northern Thailand by R. Le May, *An Asian Arcady*, Cambridge W. Heffer, 1926, pp. 104-5.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, G. E. R. Grunt Brown, "Human Sacrifices near the Upper Chindwin", *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Volume 1, Pt. 1 1911, pp. 35-40.

<sup>20</sup> M. Horam, *Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas (The Tangkhul Nagas)*, Delhi

B.R. Publ., 1977, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, London: Macmillan, 1926, p. 288.

"R. Tham et al., "Zemi Nagas", *Traces of Asia*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>22</sup> M. Horam, *Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>23</sup> This is also found amongst the Zemi Naga. For details see U Graham Bower, *Naga Path*, London: John Murray, 1950, p. 1.

and Thaita people cut chips from a stick and interpret the pattern of fallen pieces. An Naga very commonly cut a chicken's throat and put the air-jugular cavity. The point where the intestines branch into the liver fullness or emptiness, as well as the absence or presence of blood are also duly noted. Another common method is to pass a red-hot iron rod through the whilst asking the gods a specific question. The question is repeated until the stick chars through. The resulting two charred ends are then measured for signs.<sup>2</sup> It is very likely that one of these methods has been incorporated in Tai divination.

On the other hand there is an interesting parallel between the Naga tribes of war and that observed among some Tai groups. The Tanchang Naga celebrate as part of their eleven day agricultural festival in February a ritual rope-pulling game which two teams of women are engaged. Older married women are on one side and young women must be on the other. Sometimes the contest is between women of two clans.<sup>3</sup> The fact that both Nagas and Tai have the ritual tug-of-war does not indicate some point of contact but this need not necessarily be a sign of cultural contact at some stage in these two peoples' histories. In the first place the details diverge considerably between the two peoples. Such early signs of war in connection with rain and agriculture are reported for many other peoples in Southeast Asia. They are found as far south as Indonesia and as far north as the island of Okinawa in southern Japan.<sup>4</sup> The fact that Tai and Naga know a form of the ritual may be interpreted only as a sign of early links with other Southeast Asian cultures.<sup>5</sup>

### c) The Kachin

An interesting set of customs have been described for the Kachin whom by no sacrifices are performed at ever important ceremony. Human sacrifices have not been recorded, but it is often the case.<sup>6</sup> Usually 16 flames, pigs and fowls are selected for ritual slaughter, and the number varies according to the importance of the occasion. After the ceremony the sacrificial meal is commonly served between the priest and the members of the household in whose behalf the ritual takes place.<sup>7</sup> The great majority of Kachin spirits are considered to be particularly fond of blood and meat and in nearly every ceremony some parts of the sacrificial animal are cooked separately and served along with other gifts such as a container of alcohol beverage in the name of the spirit that has been addressed. There is a rule that the priest and the person on whose behalf the ritual is held are not allowed to do the actual killing for this task another person usually an elderly paternal relative of the householder is engaged. Women are

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Mills, *The Aos Nagas*, pp. 294-95.

<sup>3</sup> of Manipur, Delhi B.R. Publishing, 1974 and J. H. Hutton, *The Senia Nagas*, London Oxford University Press, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> M. Hotam, *Social and Cultural Life of the Nagas*, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> H. J. Wehrli, *Beitrag zur Ethnologie der Chingpaw (Kachin) von Ober-Burma*, Leiden, Brill, 1904, pp. 54-55.

<sup>6</sup> See the photograph in H. A. Dillendorfer, "Okinawa, the Island Rebuked," *The National Geographic Magazine*, Volume CVII, Nr 2, p. 280.

<sup>7</sup> T. K. M. Baruah, *The Singphos and Their Religion*, Shillong, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1977, p. 96.

<sup>8</sup> Further details on Naga customs can be found in T. C. Hudson, *The Naga Tribes*

not allowed to do so. In the same way, the *ta* prepare the sacrifice meat. When the *ta* have finished their ritual, they go to the temple to offer the meat to the *ta*. They also bring incense posts. Great quantities of rice-wine are consumed during the rituals. Ginger features as an important ritual ingredient.

At one agricultural ceremony a bamboo pole is strapped to a part of the house. This is done to prevent the *ta* from entering the house to the outside. It is also used to prevent the *ta* from entering the room and the city where the people live. Another reason is that the *ta* are very shy.<sup>20</sup> More common was the *ta* to be sent to the fields by the *ta* when no *ta* were available. The *Kachin* have a special custom of *ta* on the shore and the *karen*. A *ta* consists of two *ta* which are cut from a particular tree and placed on the earth set in a cross shape at some distance from each other. The *ta* are split vertically and cross each other. A long piece of bamboo twigs between may be shaped to look like tunnels. When the *ta* visit the *ta* they burn incense. The *ta* of an animal is dedicated under the altar. The shore *ta* and the *ta* posts are arranged in platforms one above the other each platform is three feet square. The *sharam* is shaved down to size, but its parts are joined together and it supports only a single platform.

With regard to the *ta* practices the most common method consists of preparing a piece of bamboo so that the edges on both sides of a selected joint and placing this joint over the *ta*. Then the bamboo will burst and split clearly afterwards. A *ta* is taken from the flames for examination. If the piece is still on fire, it is considered favourable. After the split edges show intricate patterns of thread-like lines. These can only be read and understood by experts only. Another common method of divination is to take a large animal, for example, a deer, tearing it in narrow strips. During the testimony of all others may be concentrated in a fixed order. The animal which is killed first is the one selected by a spirit as an offering. It will be the *ta* under circumstances. The resulting heap of strips of test can then be counted and the total number is uneven. It is regarded as a *ta* sacrifice.<sup>21</sup> Again, in these methods the priest and *ta* sacrifice the lives of other animals, as well as their brains and tendons.<sup>22</sup>

Whilst these divination practices form a set, different from those encountered in the *ta* of the *Karen* and the *Tu* share one specific type. I observed in the *ta* of the *Tu* last year. The *Kachin* who wants to test whether or not a house is suitable for a new house may dig a small trench about four feet deep. A bamboo is buried with three grains of rice. The

<sup>20</sup> The only other place where I have encountered pieces of bamboo bent over and tied with a strap, for ritual purpose, is in the Khamyang decoration of their *kung mu*, drawn in figure 4 of Volume I. It is a possibility that the two are somehow connected, for there has been considerable contact between *Kachin* and some Shan peoples. It would follow that the *kung mu* decoration stands for a gift being buried to

the appropriate spirits.

<sup>21</sup> Telford, "Animism in Kengtung State", p. 154; Barua, *The Singphas and Their Religion*, pp. 117-18. O. Hanson, *The Kachins, Their Customs and Traditions*, Rangoon American Baptist Mission Press, 1913, pp. 132-38.

<sup>22</sup> Wahl, *Beitrag zur Ethnologie der Chingpaw*, p. 57.

bamboo is covered and left there during the night. The next morning the contents are examined and if the grain has not been disturbed it is regarded as a favourable sign.<sup>21</sup>

When there is an epidemic the spirits, owing the region, including those of the mountains, must be propitiated. These spirits like to be presented with white coloured sacrifices such as a white buffalo or a white sow and the priest must be dressed in white. The sacrifice for warding off an epidemic is held outside the village. A part of it is set in the night there. The next morning, they perform the ritual, while taking care to avoid loud noises for these spirits apparently take offence at any sound which may be interpreted as a sign of merriness. The priest who goes into a state of trance and comes in contact with the owners of the region, asking them to take the disease away.<sup>22</sup>

In general the Tai people seem to have little in common with those of the Tai. The few accounts available would indicate that the view that the contacts between these ethnic groups are of a relatively recent date.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4) The Chin

Chin people sacrifice mithuns on many occasions, and pigs as well as bulls are slaughtered at all ceremonies.<sup>24</sup> All animals to be sacrificed must speak the night before the offering takes place in the porch of the house as so to do.<sup>25</sup> Great care is taken with regard to the sacrifice and the distribution of the animals, which has to be done by a man who is thoroughly familiar with the many intricate rules. The Chin village has communal shrines in the fields at which sacrifices are given for the opening of the land once every three, six or nine years. This is connected with the fact that these people depend upon an up-and-down shifting agricultural system. The field shrines are also set just before the cattle are allowed to graze. In addition there is a village sacrificial precinct which is situated in the village itself. This precinct is usually marked by several sacrificial stones on the ground. At the village shrine there is a banyan tree which has been planned usually by the settlement's founder.<sup>26</sup> Skins of sacrificed animals are often hung on the verandah. Another typical Chin aspect of sacrificial ritual is the display of racks of sacrificial posts and forked trees.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst all these sacrifices are evidently not related to the tradition described for the Tai, it is interesting to note that the Chin sacrifice a dog (of any sex or colour) in order to ward off evil spirits in the fields. Also a dog may be sacrificed in order to protect a person against sorcery.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Baruah, *The Siaphus and Their Religion*, p. 27. The corresponding Tai belief is described in B. J. Terwiel, "Leasing from the Gods (Thailand)", *Anthropos*, Volume 71, 1976, pp. 262-63.

<sup>22</sup> Baruah, *The Siaphus and Their Religion*, pp. 110-11.

<sup>23</sup> Lebar (et al.), *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> H. N. C. Stevenson, *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes*, Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1943, p. 146.

<sup>26</sup> P. K. Lehman, *The Structure of Chin Society, a Tribal People of Burma Adapted to a Non-Western Civilization*, Illinois Studies in Anthropology No. 3, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963, p. 176.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>28</sup> Stevenson, *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes*, p. 34.

### e) The Akha

In the other chapter literature the general principles of Akha chicken, pig, goat and buffalo sacrifice can be found. The priest kills a buffalo with a type of lance a stick which has been fitted with a metal point. He forces the stick into the animal's belly at the spine and tries to pierce the liver or the spleen.<sup>40</sup> The customs of the Burmese Akha reportedly have been heavily influenced by those of the Tai Shan. Thus their regular offering to the "lords and rulers of land and water" is borrowed from the Shan.<sup>41</sup> The cultural contacts between the Burmese Akha and some of the Tai may also account for the fact that many of their divination techniques coincide. Thus, these Akha will determine whether or not a site may be used for habitation by egg scrying in the air. If the egg breaks it is a good sign. This custom has been established to have formed part of the reconstructed Ancient Tai culture in Volume I of *The Tai of South East Asia*. The Akha examine a sacrificed animal's liver, and an egg yolk or tell-tale signs. Especially noteworthy is the fact that they use chicken's thigh bones for divination. A sacrifice is cooked, its bones broken and studied. In a hole there is the end of the bone at a plier. The bone is inserted and the angle and the alignment between bamboo star bone is used to read the future.<sup>42</sup> The Akha's north in Laos apparently concur with this latter divination technique. H. Roux who has reported on this particular method for the P'u Nai such as we will have mentioned it in his account. Both the Lanna and Burmese Akha make use of bamboo star shaped interdiction sticks which they call *lu lu* or *lu long*. All Akha groups sacrifice dogs. Often they do so at assenting over village entrances to order to frighten away evil spirits.<sup>43</sup>

### f) The P'u Nai

The P'u Nai who live in upper Laos, have been strongly influenced by Tai culture. This is clear for example when their terms in the field of religion and mythology are studied. Most of these are Tai words. The P'u Nai kill a pig every year before they prepare the fields. This sacrifice takes place at an altar which is situated at the northern end of the village. They make use of the *lakao* symbol.

Each communal sacrifice for the guardian spirit of the land takes place in the seventh month (probably June). They sacrifice leaves in tables and others to the altar outside the village which is located like a camp-base. Here are deposited two sabres, one male one female, a knife, rice, two pots with uncooked rice, one bowl of pasty, dried beans having a length of white

<sup>40</sup> H. Roux, "Deux tribus de la région de Phongsaly (Laos septentrional)", *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Asie du Sud-Est*, Volume 24, 1924, p. 404.

<sup>41</sup> P. W. Lewis, *Ethnographic Notes on the Akhas of Burma*, New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1960, pp. 256-57.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>43</sup> Roux, "Deux tribus de la région de Phongsaly", p. 404 and p. 428, O. Young, *The Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand*,

Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1962, p. 2; Boon Chuey Srisavasd. (editor), *The Hill Tribes of Siam*, Bangkok, Khun Aroon, 1963, p. 21; A. R. Walker (editor), *Farmers in the Hills, Ethnographic Notes on the Upriver Peoples of North Thailand*, The School of Comparative Social Science, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1975, opposite p. 183. In the latter source note also the bamboo *lu leh*.

cloth and one of red cloth as well as 10 pairs of candles. A pig and a fowl are killed and the spirits are addressed thus<sup>63</sup>:

Spirits of the country, we invite you to accept this sacrifice, we have offered. Please give us your protection, make the coming season a lucky one, increase our prosperity and keep disease away from us.

The most common P' N' ritual rite is technically called "the examination of fowl's thigh bones". In the small holes of any 7 bone insert sticks. Two thigh bones together with 1 pair wooden pins form pattern which are scanned. Roux has described above in what he calls their interpretations. In this it seems that if the two bones and their pins form exact mirror images the sign is neither good nor bad. If two sticks fall out in the left bone whilst a single stick point downward outwards it is a good omen. If the single pin is in a right angle with the bone the sign is bad<sup>64</sup>.

### **g) The Karen, the Lawa, the La Hu and the Khmu**

It is quite clear from the ethnographic literature that these peoples have all rich sacrificial traditions with few and scattered points of resemblance. Unfortunately there are no reports which provide us with them. A rule and regulations and in this section a fraction of somewhat disparate aspects of interesting information is presented.

If the Karen there exists a report that they sacrifice a dog in order to propitiate the spirit of the earth that they have the fear of its property. A witness reported that "I heard my grandfather was struck down with the stone from the ground before his eyes". The same account in later documents reveals that the customs were still the same. Another quite incident from those of the Lai-Tai-Sai-Tai tribes of Siam is that they place pins needles on their altars. The Lai do not use square altar stones with incense they dance around a tree which has been set up in their village or the village. Also the method of killing a verbal clubbing is the usual practice of the Tai who consider it an insult to have the blood flowing on the clothes of the victim<sup>65</sup>. One aspect which is seen by most of the people is this in this section is the batik style of design. The Lai will tell us<sup>66</sup> the Karen also use the short batik. If this view is not held then according<sup>67</sup> the Khmu know it under the name *ta-le*<sup>68</sup>.

Distribution of these previous again an interest of the author in comparison amongst the La Hu the most common use of batik is in the taking

<sup>63</sup> Roux, "Deus tridus de la region de Phongsaly", p. 481.

<sup>64</sup> For further details, see the illustrations, *ibid.*, p. 479.

<sup>65</sup> H. L. Marshall, *The Karens of Burma*, Burma Pamphlets No. 8, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1945, pp. 12-13, G. Young, *The Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand*, p. 11 and p. 70, E. W. Hutchinson, "The Lawa in Northern Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume XXVII, Pt. 2, 1935, p. 159, E. J. Walton, "The Yang Kalo (Karieng) or White Karens", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume XVI, Pt. 1, 1922, p. 45.

<sup>66</sup> H. S. Hallatt, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States*, Edinburgh-Blackwood 1890, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> A. R. Walker, "The La Hu Nyi (Red La Hu) New Year Celebrations", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume LVIII, Pt. 1, 1970, p. 639.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Plate 22.

<sup>69</sup> J. P. Andersen, "Some Notes about the Karen in Siam", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume XVIII, Pt. 2, 1923, p. 54.

<sup>70</sup> H. Roux and Tran-Van-Chu, "Les Tso Khmu", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient*, Volume 27, 1927, p. 202.

a pair of broken thimbles and sticks were kept in the small holes. The rest of the bones of the body I removed to pass at, but in the breast were found two long slender single hole can be seen to rear and one to front of heart. If the pins fit well these may be considered as the 1st & 2nd Other Laha is not a common bird and is hard to find. In the heart in the following manner it is found to be 100 mm. length and is about 10 mm. wide. The first action of which the taxidermist may be expected. Apart from this the skinner may also open the fowls head and examine the way the tongue bone sticks up.<sup>62</sup>

Chim or mouth of avocation among the Khmer are for example the ~~rain~~, ~~the wind~~, ~~the sun~~ & a pin ~~it~~ of rice. When taking the grain it must be ascertained whether an even or an uneven number is wished. If the declaration is ~~that~~ ~~it~~ to respond with what is actually found between the fingers, this is taken to mean that the required spirit has made contact. A second successful prediction is needed for confirmation. Another method is the careful examination of an egg yolk where special attention is given to the occurrence of red spots or streaks. Fowl's feet are examined for the position of the toes and the joints of tongue bone must be straight before it indicates a good omen. The chicken's eyes are checked and two white lines inside its nostrils are observed. Finally a chicken's cranium is scrutinised in order to see whether it is evenly white. If any blood streaks are found, some bad luck lies ahead.<sup>22</sup>

## b) The Hmong

The Hsiung mountain tribesmen of Yünnan appear to be in southern China also have a sacrificial religion. Sometimes they offer buffaloes and even bulls are commonly levered as oxen and cows. Many of the sacrifices will have been performed in state or community rituals but unfortunately there is no systematic information available connected with those central in this study.

The H'mong celebrate an elaborate three day New Year festival which starts during the dark phase of the moon in December after the harvest has been reaped. For three days all work stops. In each household chickens are sacrificed for the souls of the forefathers or the ancestors. A cock is sacrificed for the house spirit and its blood is daubed on a piece of paper. Chickens are also given to the spirit of the drum and to the healing powers. Apart from these household rituals the New Year ritual is also the *creeg* or sacrifice of a pig to *Tierlee Tuu Sen*, the community's guardian spirit. This pig is paid for with contributions from all households. The ceremony takes place at a grove outside the a lao village. Various powers, such as those of the earth, the forest, the street, and the mountains are invoked. The pig is slaughtered, skinned and parts of it, together with a little rice are offered to these spirits.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Telford, "Animism in Kengtung State", *Hmong Muu*, Bangkok: The Siam Society, pp. 151-2, 1976, p. 135. Later Nusit states that no

"Further details can be found in Roux and Trao-Van-Chu, "Les Tsa Khmu", pp. 21-22.

444 Chindarji, *The Religion of the*

Amongst the Hmong Nax there are various apotropaic sacrifices for the spirit of the central pole. On the first day of the new year, during the next seven weeks, women are allowed to go to the house because it can be set on fire. They have written notes to the spirits of the sevens. The pig's blood is bailed and the animal, as is long, on the pole, where it will remain until a new pig is offered.

Every seven or fourteen days in the West Lao, at Tuk Kao, there is a large buffalo sacrifice in the mountains. Once the process is over the drums are beaten and the ancestors have been invited to attend. Near the house a brand new sacrifice post is erected. The old posts, similar posts which have been left standing on the mountain side, are broken when the buffalo is led out and beaten. These posts are placed on the ground. An iron nail is held against the victim's forehead and a red bow is struck against the nail, resulting in the animal's death. Then a cloth is made from its throat and its skin is left on the ground. The animal is turned up and distributed among the members of the community and the other participants. The heart is placed on the ground and it remains until nightfall. Other posts, decorated as pens with crescent-shaped tops,<sup>41</sup> are erected at some distance from the shore. A post for each animal killed.<sup>42</sup>

The Hmong believe that entrance posts are particularly afraid of a dog's spirit. Therefore they prefer to walk on the ice of Lake West rather than sacrifice a dog which is sacred to them. They bring it from another tribe. When an animal is necessary for the sacrifice it is pulled on a lead from beside the temple and it is given a stab in the neck. The blood is collected on a cloth which is tied to the back of the people. Certain cords fastened to the animal's horns and antlers are then stuck into a palm tree root substance. Two rays of straw are then laid along the road to the village. This is an example of the main entrance road. Since any animal which crosses it is subject to human protection against the threat.

Whilst the sacrifice in honour of Tuk Tuk Neua is also the scouring which a red dog will do, the two animals are not the same. They have been described as opposite to Tuk Neua. In the north of Laos they are found in the desertion of a certain town. Most of the trees planted there are palm trees. The black dog is called 'the black dog' because it has a black tail. When the priest makes contact with the spirit he carries his spear up on the shore the combination of both dogs and the ancestor post have been to gain their attention. The use of these two post stones has also been reported by at least one group. The new arrivals from Black Dog Lao speak of many Hmong divination implements. The Hmong examine the sacrificed

<sup>41</sup> De Beauclair, *Tribal Cultures of Southwest China, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs*, Volume II, Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1970, pp. 54-5.

<sup>42</sup> Nasit Chundarsi, *The Religion of the Hmong Nax*, p. 110. De Beauclair also mentions a Black Hmong dog sacrifice.

but provides no details (*Tribal Cultures of Southwest China*, p. 55).

<sup>43</sup> L. R. Pederson, "Religious Activities during Dry Season among the Lao Song Dam, Thailand", *Folk, Dansk Etnografisk Tidsskrift*, Volume 16-17, 1974-1975, p. 356.

chicken's bones here. This ought to show a straight neck bone curving upwards. As Figure 2 shows, the neck of the rooster backbones of individuals may differ. As we can see, the bone and that of the skull are taken into account. The Lai-ting take a particular care to clean the thigh bones, and examine the small holes in them. These bones ought to be on the true side under the bones of the leg on the outside.<sup>7</sup> A very part of the chicken which may be very difficult to remove is the straight and symmetrical. A liver may be considered fresh enough in the rice of a bottle, whilst meat should be seen off. Such a sacrifice will always be followed with a person's sickness. The sacrifice which is successful, and not succeeded is regarded as the best answer.

The customs of animal rituals and divination practices correspond so neatly with those which have been established in the Tai that some rather Chinese configurations could possibly be assumed. The distribution of the Hmong over a vast area, but across southern China and stretching as far as the sea, has created a certain hypothesis possibility. An argument against this is that if their habitat changed in the past, would not lead to intensive cultural contact also change? A theory which would take all these points into account would be the one in which the Hmong are denoted as people who use to be nomadic hunters who were forced to seek their refuge in the mountains as a result of severe clashes with the Chinese. The evidence brought forward in this section may, however, not be regarded as conclusive. Some of the villages, which formed the basic observation units of the old players' records may have been influenced by Tai peoples in comparatively recent times.<sup>8</sup>

## II The Chinese traditions

Human sacrifices are recorded in Chinese history often in connection with warfare. Prisoners of war were usually beheaded and their blood smeared in the pole of victory which was carried by the Chinese army. If an enemy prince was captured he enjoyed the chance to sacrifice himself in the manner described above and have his feet in his victim's blood.<sup>9</sup> Such accounts have become very rare in post-Han. The cruel human sacrifices encountered earlier (Other human sacrifices took place during burials, but such customs are mainly recorded after the certainly himatately preceding the Han period)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Nasut Chindral, *The Religion of the Hmong Njua*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>8</sup> H. A. Bernatzik, *Akha und Mien. Probleme der Angewandten Volkerkunde in Hinterindien*, Innsbruck: Wagner'sche Univ. Buchdruckerei, 1947, Volume I, pp. 18-22 and p. 192.

<sup>9</sup> F. M. Savary, *Histoire des Miao*, Hong-kong: Imprimerie de la Societe des Missions Etrangères, 1924, pp. 100-62.

<sup>10</sup> The intimate relationship between one Hmong group and the Tung-chia, a *Tai*-speaking lowland group of southern China, are described by J. de Beauvoir, "A Miao Tribe of Southeast Kwangshau and its

Cultural Configuration", p. 162 et seq. Those Hmong are reported to have taken the plains culture into the mountains.

<sup>11</sup> F. H. Giles, "Some Gleanings of Manners and Customs of the Chinese People as Revealed in Historical Narratives and Novels", *Journal of the Sans Society*, Volume XX, Pt. 3, 1927, pp. 227-28.

<sup>12</sup> J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Volume II, Book 1, Taipei: Chung Wen Publishing, 1972, p. 721 et seq. See also M. Granet, *The Religion of the Chinese People* (translated and edited by M. Freedman), Oxford: Blackwell, 1973, pp. 79-80.

For the purpose of this study more relevant information is the fact that in early China as early as the second century of our era, has at the end of what in this study is called the "Proto-Tai" period, dogs were selected and slaughtered. For this white dogs were selected and their carcasses were hung at the city gates in order to ward off calamities. The dog's blood was also sprinkled around for exorcising purposes.<sup>61</sup>

With respect to divination from very early times the Chinese oracle bone divination system developed. The details need not be elaborated here since this type of divination has not been encountered amongst the Tai.<sup>62</sup> A different Chinese divination system, one which has been used amongst the Tai and other ethnic groups, is the use of the divining blocks. This goes back at least to the eighth century of our era. A Chinese altar is not complete without at least a pair of such blocks. In early times they have been described as kidney shaped pieces of bamboo rods six to eight inches long, each having one flat and one convex side. They are dropped on the ground and if they both end lying with their flat or with the convex side up the answer is read as negative. If one shows convex and the other flat it is considered as a positive sign from the unseen power who is being addressed.<sup>63</sup> The divination with a cock's shin bones, the small halves of which serve to determine luck or misfortune, also is a custom found in China and which goes back a considerable number of centuries. It has been described for the people of Kwangtung as far back as the early Han period.<sup>64</sup>

#### D The Ch'iang

In the varied literature on minority groups in southern China a similar springtime sacrifice amongst the Ch'iang, who live in western Szechuan was encountered.<sup>65</sup> Although there is no reason to believe that the Ch'iang and the Tai peoples have ever been in direct contact, it is interesting to take note of these customs. Indeed, the fact that no direct contact may be presumed makes it a case in which to a certain extent the premises of this book may be tested. If a large number of ritual details prove to be similar it will be necessary to reassess the model of early Tai history upon which this analysis rests.

Every spring the Ch'iang hold a large scale ceremony in order to ask for good crops for rain and for a prosperous year. In return they promise to

<sup>61</sup> J. J. M. de Groot *The Religious System of China*, Volume VI, Book II, p. 1006, et seq.

<sup>62</sup> The Lolo are reported to throw lamb's shoulderbones in the fire and to examine the resulting cracks. For details see Lin Yüeh-hua, *The Lolo of Liang Shan* (translated by Ju-Shu Pan), New Haven: HRAF Press, 1961, pp. 128-29. The Lolo method of making a great number of parallel incisions on wood and counting whether or not they come to an uneven number (this being auspicious), resembles very much the Kachin system of tearing a leaf in long shreds, which has been described above. For that matter, there is a certain similarity between

throwing a shoulder blade in the fire and a piece of bamboo, in both cases the destructive forces of the fire leave tell-tale signs.

<sup>63</sup> De Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Volume VI, Book II, pp. 125-27.

<sup>64</sup> References to the appropriate Chinese sources are mentioned in H. Stöbel, *Die Li-Stämme der Insel Hainan, ein Beitrag zur Volkskunde Südchinas*, Berlin: Junker & Dürrnag, 1937, p. 69.

<sup>65</sup> D. C. Graham, *The Customs and Religion of the Ch'iang* Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Volume 135, Number 1, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1958, pp. 58-64 and pp. 102-3.

give a second offering at the fall after it can be decided whether or not the year will be a good one. These offerings are ritualized by places on the hill slopes and at the sacred groves. Where there are believed to be impure animals, they are not allowed to attend these rituals. Only goats and cocks are the animals most frequently used in sacrifices, but of these among the goat is most important and most frequently selected. Only male flocks or wild animals are used since there the male animal is killed; they are called like this because they are blacker than others. The animals are purged by burning them alive, smoke and the carcass are put up at a pole at the sacred grove. From the animal's heart the olfactory organ is taken. Some of it is thrown away and the heart is placed in a vessel. Some of it is thrown away and the heart is placed in a vessel. First the right ear and testicles are taken, the ear being stuck on a paper flag and then the penis and testicles are made into a fire which must be made of cedar twigs. The altar is a tray of steaming stone. The rest of the animal is skinned and its fat is melted and placed on fresh twigs. The brains and kidneys are separately offered to the gods. Finally the flesh and blood are boiled and eaten until any remainder may be devoured and taken home by the participants.

It is clear from this summary account that though the two groups share a general structure, the Tai and the Co-ang differ markedly in the ritual details.

## b) The Muong

The largest collective Muong ritual is the one held in late January or early February which corresponds with the New Year. At that time the villagers observe certain restrictions. They return home with their fields and place bamboo sticks around their houses which they call *muu*.<sup>68</sup> They prepare seven separate offerings, known as sacrifice game, such as deer. I noticed that has been obtained from a hunt, a bullock, a pig and a number of fowls may serve as substitutes. During the night there is a decorative arrangement of gourds and long beans. The offerings of meat, cakes and rice wine are offered at the cult house where prayers are said and a purple prostitute finally separates the sacrifice to the gods, to the ancestors, to the spirit of the earth, to the spirit here and to the spirit of badgers.

A man of the Muong, Kien, I saw sometimes near an altar is strictly avoided. The victim is circumcised and prepared beforehand so as not to disturb the feelings of the other heroes. Blood may never flow before the spirits because the shedding of blood is a violent act.<sup>69</sup> The animals that may be offered range from various types of cattle to domestic animals such as hawks, pigeons, chickens and so on. The latter occupies a special place because sacrifice is generally not carried out until the Muong are only after a present has been sent to each of the gods during the first sowing ceremony, will they break this food taboo.

Several methods of initiation are mentioned by Cuisnier. A common one is the throwing of bamboo sticks on a rock to see whether or not a

<sup>68</sup> J. Cuisnier, *Les Muong, géographie humaine et sociologie*, Université de Paris, Travaux et mémoires du Institut d'Ethnologie, Volume XLV, Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1946, p. 136, 288 and 509. The following details are taken from the same source.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 352-53.

spirit has made contact with the priest, or whether this spirit finds the offerings acceptable. Another consists of the examination of a boiled chicken's fat in order to discover if a family may expect a good year or whether there are problems lying ahead. A family's fortunes may also be examined by letting all members light a cotton wick each of which has been dipped in ink. All those whose wicks burn well may expect a good fortune but if a wick fails to catch fire easily or if it burns badly it indicates ill fortune. The diviner will suddenly wave a rattle over the family as a whole and expect many luck. If on the other hand some wicks keep burning this is ok - as it is written.<sup>21</sup>

Muong sacrifices are less formal than those of the Tai. Whilst the Tai consider the flow of blood near an altar an essential tal aspect of the ceremony, the Muong do not insist on this. Whilst the Tai choose a buffalo as their best gift for the guardian spirits, the Muong prefer to offer a deer. Whilst the Tai kill a deer to war - sickness, the Muong kill a dog during an agricultural ritual. In the various ethnic groups of the war groups there are however considerable similarities and also the two ethnic groups share the use of the bamboo interdiction drum.

#### **D) Other Vietnamese minority groups**

Apart from the M'Nong people there are many other cultural divisions in Vietnam such as the Lao, the Rengas, the Bahmar and the Sieng who all speak Mon-Khmer languages, and the Jarai (representatives of the few peoples remaining Southeast Asia speaking a Malayo-Polynesian language). The sacrificial traditions of these minority groups cannot be described here in detail, but for the purpose of this study certain aspects have been extrapolated from the ethnographic accounts.

In general, the Vietnamese highlanders sacrifice buffaloes, even, pigs, goats and fowls. Dog sacrifices are rare and they appear to be held only on exceptional occasions. The Sieng must sacrifice a black dog to atone for murder. A horse sacrifice can be held amongst the Jarai. Several of these groups reserve white animals for offerings to the spirits - banters and black ones for the spirits of spiders. Only men attend the great communal sacrifices.

The sacrificial details such as the method of killing, the way of presenting gifts, the shape of the altars and other ritual paraphernalia are often considerably at variance with those received by the Tai people.<sup>22</sup> As an example of a typical Vietnamese highlander sacrifice the most important Jarai communal festival is taken. This lasts seven days and it is held during the dry season. During this great sacrifice every family kills a buffalo, a pig and a goat. The way before the killing the banters with his horns decorated is tied to the foot of the great mast which rises over the sacrifice post. The

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 484-85.

<sup>22</sup> P. Guilleminet, "La tribu Bahmar du Kontum", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Volume XLV, 1952, p. 422.

"J. Boulbet, *Pays des Maô, domaine des gentes Ngar Maô, Ngar Yang*, Publication de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,

Volume LXII, Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1967, pp. 51-54; M. M. J. Kemlin, "Rites agraires des Rengas", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Volume IX, 1909, pp. 493-94; Le-Van-Hao, "Les fêtes saisonnières au Vietnam" *Revue de Sud-Est Asiatique*, 1962, No. 4, pp. 265-315.

next day the animal has his legs tied together and lies on his side when he is pierced in the chest with lancets. Then a pig and a goat are also killed. The blood of the three animals is smeared at the front of each and arms of all the members of the family. A tree is planted between the paths where the animal is killed. The Long consists of the tree. I watch the ho-ho-ho-ho appears to say the same protective styles or partly. The buffalo's blood will make the person at the mouth fertile, just as the rains will help the people grow in the rice." The Jiral crest of hair is to be spirit's nurture and therefore the victim can consume any consecrated animal's blood. Evil spirits are believed to be especially fond of goats' blood. Therefore, one of the methods of driving away evil spirits from a village consists of the killing of a goat in a river. The blood rapidly flows away, hopefully taking the greedy malevolent powers along.<sup>74</sup>

### m) The Khmer

There are many accounts of human sacrifices in Cambodia and some of these are rather repulsive. By and large Khmer human sacrifices fall into two categories. The first consists of an offering to appease a powerful spirit and the risk of the region's prosperity and rain. The sacrificer arrives with a sabre, dances around the victim and severs his head with a single cut. The victim is weighed down by stones and suspended at the future. It spreads over the entire region and may be expected in the entire district but if stood walls to one side or a part of the region would obtain good rains. The victim's head is impaled and his body is chopped into many pieces and offered to the divinity. Bull-like offerings have taken the place of these human sacrifices, but they are performed in a similar manner; the way its blood flows is interpreted similarly and its meat is divided in the same way.<sup>75</sup>

This account appears related to the somewhat vague oral history reported earlier for southern Laos, whereby it is said that forty humans were turned into stone in order to obtain rain. When it is realised that the Cambodian tribes described above are of considerable age going back to the time when the Khmer empire extended over the region now called southern Laos, it becomes apparent that the Laotian account refers to the old Cambodian practices.

The second type of human sacrifice concerns the burial of a live person in the spot where mountain gates or fortifications were built. This interment under the feet of troops is intended to create fierce guardian spirits. The custom has rarely been mentioned for the Burmese and the Siamese.

The Champa village communal sacrifice has been described in some detail by Pierre Maspero. The ritual may be held twice a year, once at the end of the dry season, to ask for rain and once at the end of the rainy

<sup>74</sup>J. D. Lajoux, *Le nombre du déuge, villages des montagnes d'Indochine*, Paris Editions du Seuil, 1977, pp. 6-11 and pp. 102-5.

<sup>75</sup>P. B. Lafont, *Tulsi Djug, Contumier de la tribu Jiral*, Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Volume LI, Paris: Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient, 1963, p. 210 and p. 253.

<sup>76</sup>D. P. Chandler, "Royally Sponsored Human Sacrifice in Nineteenth Century Cambodia: the Cult of Nak Ta Me Sa (Mahasuramardini) at Ba Phnom" *Journal of the Siam Society* Volume 62 Pt 2, 1974, p. 221; Potier-Maspéro, *Etude sur les rituels agraires des Cambodgiens*, Volume I, pp. 243-46.

season to ask for happiness and peace. On the night preceding the sacrifice the villagers Jane and pray in throughout the night before the sacrifice of two levels which has been set up at the foot of a stone and a dead tree. The next morning four names are written on the crossroads village. The spirit and the villagers, in procession bear a buffalo and tether him to a nearby tree. The officiating priest goes to town and becomes possessed with the guardian spirit. The he vests himself with a knife and its blood is caught in a earthenware vessel. As soon as the animal is killed the head is severed in presence of the guardian spirit and then all the blood is further divided. The priest is possessed by the spirit of the sacrifice blood and cuts off a piece of meat to be distributed to the people. Villagers then ask him whether or not the ritual is propitious. Not long afterwards the spirit rises and the villagers prepare to eat the buffalo meat. Nothing may be taken home.

O the Lachinian villages the sacrifice has already been made in winter and spring. In the South the quantity of blood is taken as in proportion to the types of rain which are to fall in the coming season. At the same time a sign is taken out. On other occasions the ground directly under the victim is sowed by a simple the reason just as the Lachinians do. A piece of cloth was prepared is taken as a distinct sign. In this way persons know it may be known whether or not the Kimer in Lachin are based on the same. It is reported also be imagined that the Lachinians represent the old sacrifices which may have been done in blood by the Central Asian Turkic tribesman destination technique and this form of sacrifice has not been retained for the custom of turning three or four spits downwards they are also and letting them drip wax on a piece of banana leaf. The three candles may be taken to stand for three seasons. If a candle suddenly extinguishes it is taken as a bad sign for the procession to return. The flow of wax may increase or decrease during the last burning and this indicates periods of abundant rain and dryness respectively. If three or wax drop down at once this is taken as an indication of severe thunderstorm. The resulting wax patterns on the banana leaf are considered to tell the future.<sup>22</sup>

### a) The Pear

The last group in this overstatement peoples who surround the Tai are the Pear Mon-Kimer speakers in the upper regions of Cambodia.<sup>23</sup> The only animals sacrificed by the Pear are chickens even pigs and fowls. The Pear celebrate communal sacrifices twice every year in May and in December. When there is a drought an oracle of some sort usually threatens a Pear village they call the great Sra K. This sacrifice lasts two days and a night. Sra K is held outside the village where a shrine is built which is surrounded by banana trunk stems. On this the day the sacrificed buffalo is led to the shrine the guardian spirit of the region is invoked and the priest may be possessed by this power. In the case of the killing a special sacrificial knife is used. The buffalo is put between two posts and its neck

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242 ff

de la région des montagnes des Cardamomes", *Journal of the Royal Society*,

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II, p. 410.

<sup>24</sup> J. Brengues, "Note sur les populations

Volume II, 1906, p. 35 ff

as well as the back tendons are cut. A piece of *camomile* is offered to the ground where the killing has taken place. The head becomes the principal part of the sacrifice, the entrails are removed and the head is impaled upon a post of bamboo. At the same time pieces of *camomile* are planted. A woman then comes to the scene and cuts the body in half and holds the head as well as the entrails over these *camomile* plants in front of the impaled head.

### Analysis

#### 1) Human sacrifices

In the present sections several distinct types of human sacrifice have been discussed. Firstly there are records of humans killed during funerals among the Akha, the Shan and in pre-Han China. In all these cases the custom seems to be part of the funeral customs of members of the most powerful ruling families. The offering may be seen as an elaboration on the more general theme of destroyin<sup>g</sup> an heir or a living descendant after the death of the deceased. The custom has been recorded for two dynasties. The accounts only and therefore it does not qualify for inclusion as part of the Ancient Tai customs. At this stage of the research it is even impossible to assess whether the Akha and the Shan customs are related because a number of ritual details have been collected only for the Akha. Secondly, if the exact manner of presenting the dead with human sacrifices in pre-Han China has been taken into account, it is unwarranted to suggest that the custom is, or is not, related to that of some of the Tat.

A second type which has been mentioned is the periodical human sacrifice in order to satisfy a particular powerful spirit. There are a number of instances of this type, say, as the Khao Iben offering the Koch believeing between 1000 and 2000 people the Cava, at times 10 Pishasi, the Akha feast of Phu Mae Thao, the Shan offerings. In various the Tan account of a king who used to bewail two victims and the Caribbean periodical human sacrifices to obtain rain and prosperity. The evidence which has been presented suggests that the Khao and the Koch customs are unrelated to those of the Tat, but that there has been borrowing from the Chutia in the matter of the human offerings to Phu Mae Thao. The Shan sacrifices form a separate variant which through a lack of detailed description thus far cannot be related to other known traditions. In the case of the account from southern Laos it has been suggested that most probably this refers to well-established Cambodian practices. Like the case of human offerings at funerals there is no record in Laos of this type of sacrifice in the Ancient Tai religion.

A third quite distinct type of human sacrifice is the killing of people under certain circumstances and by extension also under certain magical pillars. The killing under bridges has been reported for the Burmese, the Shan, the Siamese and the Khao. Accounts of *mooring* pillar immulations come from the Yuan, the Siamese and the Lac. In all cases it is believed that the victim will be transformed into a strong guard in spirit. The evidence brought together suggests that the Shan and the Siamese adopted the custom as a result of their intimate contacts with the Burmese and Caribbeans, and that the reports of the unsubstantiated of people being crushed under

" By pillar " are it so termed from the Burmese and Cambodians. These types of victims have not been used by most tribes people who live in little rain forest with Burmese or Khmer. But such types have, no doubt, also been introduced in the Ayeyarwady basin. There are, however, five being, and a half-line, and no more, to be found in the eastern plains of La-ppe and Asia. It is by no means clear what all these symbols are relate to, they probably all relate to the field of agriculture. In the case of the " pillar " and " Shiva " and " Apsara " there was a special death ceremony, whereby one or more victims were crushed to death. A few Tai groups who still have retained a belief in the power of their were selected as victims. It is believed the Apsara to be sent to the underworld a pregnant woman will create a particularly strong and vicious spirit.

A final mention of human sacrifice is the report which tells that the Aztec ceremony of *Coateotl* has been noted however, but the object of Coateotl's offering is impossible to determine because no details state exactly what the offering was to be. It may seem like a weak argument possibly, but it is still a fact.

## 2) Animal sacrifices

Whilst many of us probably don't understand the Aymara, their customs vary by type from culture to culture. In the Andean culture alone there is been a tradition of *taq*, which were killed on many occasions. In the Andes, it is common to have hearings processes and during a hearing it is said the Andean Taq seem to have many features with them. It is also said that the Taq seems to be most abundant in the Andes. It is implied here the ritual deity such as the sun or moon are selected even what number, and as well as the Taq will be a basic tool only regarding whether or not a certain issue can be part of the Andean culture but also whether this is related with particular tribe or not.

With respect to the types of animals sacrificed in the groves in which the sacrificial tradition has been re-enacted, all kinds of stock, especially of relatively minor importance, as pigs, are reported as used and a buffalo offering is everywhere considered the highest sacrifice. The annual or semi-annual buffalo sacrifice became the central rite in this part of the hook, mainly because it had been introduced by the Assamese Tai Surya sacrifices were found at least in Assam in the case of the Yen, the Tai of northeastern Thailand, the Iu, the Tai Nau, the Black, White and Red Tai. This was first introduced by a buffalo sacrifice in the early part of the Ancient Tai rule in Assam. In general, with regard to the sacrificial ritual details, the Tai society shares similarities with the Kachin and Chin, the Lawa, the White Tai, the Muay, and a range of other minority groups in Vietnam, and a number of others, such as the Khasi, the Naga, some Assamese communities, the Chinese and the Vietnamese minorities. Most of the groups here mentioned consider the buffalo as an important sacrificial animal. The fact that the Assamese community can be seen as evidence of an ancient Tai and Assamese sacrificial tradition with those of the Ahom.

Tai sacrifice	Other Tai	Non-Tai
Black bull	Black bull	Black bull
Black swan	Black swan	Black swan

The Tais, however, do not seem to have been the only ones to celebrate the annual or semi-annual ritual; others hold their sacrifice in the fourth month of the year. In the Chinese calendar this corresponds to the month of April or May. In the *Pu Nai Lu* (Pu Nai's Record), written in the 11th century, it is noted that the *Lu* (the first day of the fourth month) is the day when the *Lu* (black) bull is sacrificed. This appears to be between Ancient Tai and other Mon-Khmer peoples. This may be relevant and a basis for some future study of the background of Tai culture.

The bull is known to be a very interesting sacrificial animal. In the pre-Han period the sacrifice has been noted for the Akom, the Phakey, the Naga, the Ne, the Red Tai and the Cheang. In a considerable number of cases the bull sacrifice has been connected with the warding off of evil spirits or demons. In the later periods we presented in this chapter, such as the Tang, similar circumstances have been noted for the Akom, the Karen and the Lao, and it has been recorded also for the Chinese, even in the 1st millennium A.D. With the available evidence it is plausible to assume that the Meng and the Strong dog sacrificed bulls in the past. The first half of the legend refers to warding off evil spirits, but the story is also related and further evidence of contact between the Chinese and the groups may be present. The evidence presented so far is compatible with the view that the Ancient Tai learned the practice from the Chinese and one prior to their spread over Southeast Asia. This is in accord with the broad outline of Tai cultural history which has its basis in the early in which many close cultural contacts between the Lao and the Chinese are presumed to have occurred between the end of the Han period and the eighth century A.D.

With respect to the colour of the sacrificial animals, it has already been noted that a people was said to specify the colour of the victim, such as when the Phakey were asked to give to Phn Saea Mieng or the Lao who were a black one. Altogether nine instances have been recorded, in which it was prescribed: Akom, Khamyang, Phakey, Yuan, Wu, Muang, and nine cases when a black one should be killed. (See Kuan Lin Yuan and Lao). In addition there were two instances when a black and a white animal is characterized (Lao and Yuan). To the author's knowledge, no case has been mentioned among the Lao who offered a white animal. Phakey Lao. A cream-coloured buffalo was mentioned once, as was also a brown swan. No regular pattern which would be repeated seems to exist. Each of these colours is discernible in the Tai material.

The same brings together in the same way, reminiscent of the friends in the Lao Dubi, men as the black or white goat to horse but his wife connects this statement with the fact that he is a black one. He has to give with animal in some cases. The Chinese kill a white dog to that purpose. And the purity groups sometimes have white animals and on other hand black ones. Overall the white and black, but predominantly the black, is the aspect

has been recorded. Again no pattern is readily discernible in the choice between these two favourable colours. The broad perspective seems to be the colour red is the colour most prescribed for personal Tai sacrifices. The Chiang know the red dog sacrifice mostly as the result of intimate contact with Lao culture. The Lao selected red both a red dog and a red hen for their regular sacrifices also on other occasions they prefer a cream coloured huli. It is essential that the huli in question is not castrated and is even in colour "to the hairs of his tail".<sup>18</sup>

The last remark may present an important clue regarding the colour prescriptions. The Lao sometimes may well be directly related to the general principle that the greatest gifts to the gods must be without any blemish and of great beauty. Amongst the traditional Tai groups as well as amongst many of their neighbours it is not permitted to present the gods an animal which is sick, i.e., crippled. To be effective attractive and persuasive, the offering must be strong and vigorous. Hence at least some of the prescriptions regarding colour may be simply the outcome of a wish to give a thing of beauty.

In some of the cases, the choice of colour is prescribed by nature. It would be difficult to find a boar in traditional Southeast Asia which is not black. Similarly a duck or a fowl of an even colour tends to be pure white. This consideration may explain some of the cases where a red dog is selected for sacrifice for dogs with reddish coats predominate in the region. However, this reference to the laws of nature explains by no means all cases. Sometimes there may even be a deeper, indeed very hidden meaning attached to a specific selection of colour, but until now there have been no clear cases recorded. It is not impossible that a deeper meaning of the red colour for some Jing sacrifices will be found in a systematic analysis of myths and legends, for it has been remarked by several researchers that the dog may have featured large in some myths as an ancestral animal, and that there are traces of what some authors believe to be a tenacity in these beliefs.<sup>19</sup>

At the end of chapter 4 of this book the problem of why some Tai groups refer to a dog with the expression "golden deer" was raised. It is unlikely that this reflects a practice whereby a real deer of a particular hue was sacrificed, because unlike deer animals the people are not in control of what type of pelt they will be able to bring home from hunting. The wider ranging on sacrifice suggests a possible explanation for this peculiar custom. A Chiang priest makes use of a series of ritual invocations when addressing the spirits substituting ordinary words with elaborate expressions which have to indicate the relevant meaning to the outsider. The Chiang priest presenting offerings to the gods says "black deer".

<sup>18</sup> E. W. Hutchinson, "The Laws in Northern Siam", p. 159. *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Volume I, 1930, pp. 379-399.

<sup>19</sup> The remarkable position of the dog can be found in the following sources. A. L. M. Bonifacy, "Etude sur les Try de la Rivière Claire, au Tonkin et dans la Chine méridionale (Yun-nan et Kouang-tché)", *Tsing-Pao*, Volume VIII, 1907, p. 95; W. Koppers, "Der Hund in der Mythologie der Zirkumpazischen Völker", *Monumenta Serica*, Volume III, 1938, p. 373, and his *Die Li-Stämme der Insel Hainan*, p. 277, and E. Poree-Maspero, *Etude sur les rites agroïques des Cambodgiens*, Volume II, pp. 435-6 et seqq.

instead of "water", "pure in taste", "tempered flavor", "excellent poacher", instead of "pig", "pig with broad feet" instead of "ox", "stiff silk" instead of "pig" and "pig stiffened and folded at the tail".<sup>1</sup> Similarly the Tairin Nante Ahom, in use for ordinary sacrifices, when they beat each other this however, Lao, their references, but have a specific word, a root indicates this is not the pig but the dog. It is not suggested that "pig" ever. A more specific consideration, perhaps, is how some type of cultural contact may have come about, or substitute, and culture, as may take place in the case of the Lao, to "pig" when "dog" is meant.

The fact that amongst Lao peoples as well as among some of their neighbours, including the Lao, to call in fact, ward off danger and disease is possibly a continuation of the tradition in Southeast Asian households. In the Tai villages, as are by no means "man's intimate friends", who share the air of the earth. On the contrary the Tai will isolate themselves, up the hill which covers the living quarters. They are kept away from the area where he does not sit and they are never allowed near his heart. All people are aware of the fact that dog is a scavenger and that this animal eats on an lean matter. Their chief role is to protect the house. Strangers have cause to fear the dog's bark and his bays and, by extension, to evil spirits may be kept away by the dog's barks or bays after it has been sacrificed.<sup>2</sup> In this context it may be noted that in the literature on sacrifices in Southeast Asia no reference has yet been found to a cat offering. It seems that the cat may be the only domesticated animal of the region to escape ritual slaughter.

### 3) The talao

The talao is a square or a star shaped door, made solely of bamboo splints. Sometimes it may in the form of a star with three, five or six points, in other cases the number of bamboo strips used is so great that the resulting shape is roughly circular. It is used as a sign to warn people of evil spirits staying there. For the Lao people, they have been encountered amongst the Shan, the Lue, the Yuan, the Siamese, the Lao, the White Tai, and the Red Tai.<sup>3</sup> There can be little doubt as to the fact that these talao

<sup>1</sup> D. C. Graham, *The Customs and Religion of the Chittay*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> A much more primitive relationship between man and dog is described for some Hmong Njuu by Nusit Chindarat (The Religion of the Hmong Njuu, p. 168).

<sup>3</sup> For the Shan see Kauffmann "Thread-square and Talao", p. 496, for the Lue, see Iizukowicz, "Notes about the Tu", for the Yuan see Nuttan, *Annales de Siam*, Volume I, p. 62, for the Siamese, see Kingkroo Attanay, *The Folk Religion of Ban Nul, a Hamlet in Central Thailand*, Bangkok Kurupapha Press, 1967, p. 61, Phya Anuman Rajadhon, "Notes on the

Thread Square in Thailand", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume LV, Pt 2, 1967, pp. 162-4, and McFarland, *Thai-English Dictionary*, p. 271, for the Lao see Archonbrault, "Le lang du bo devait luong & luong Prabang", pp. 230-31, L. Mogenet, "Notes sur la conception de l'espace à Louang Prabang", *Bulletin des Amis du Royaume Lao*, Volume 7-8, 1972, pp. 176-8, and Chao Kham Mai Vongkot Rattana, "Les rites du culte des phi", p. 98, for the White Tai, H. Dreyfier, *Lakupala*, p. 230, and for the Red Tai see R. Robert, Notes sur les Tay Deng, Plaies XXXVIII and XXXIX.

signs are related, they share not only the shape-square characteristic but they are also used under similar conditions. To beat the *tal* (the *Re*) is to exorcise the star in order to keep the *gau* away. It is placed at a street corner or at the entrance of a house so that it may be placed close by a cluster of bamboo or any other shrubs so that somebody has already come across it. A *gau* may be placed at the entrance of a *huk* as an indication that bears are not allowed to enter. Often the *tal* is a *tak* (a knot of red sprigs which is usually placed at a door placed on top of a *gau* along with a small piece of red cloth to propitiate).

Kaufmann who has made a considerable study of the symbolic uses<sup>44</sup> has separate uses for two types of tal. The first use is as both a ward and an protection of a particular way. If taken in red, the second use is white. Kaufmann recognises only one symbol of a spirit. Examples of the first use can be found at several sacrificial sites, the Lawa plain, where the *gau* spirit is in the attachment tent of *huk* or some part of the Karen plain, there was a *gau* spirit and the use of *gau* in streams when asking the water spirit for a good day.<sup>45</sup> On first sight the two uses seem contradictory since one being used in the one hand to ward off spirits and in the other to attract them. In my opinion however, in these instances, however, but in a few cases of the *gau* named to keep out the way of *gau*, the *gau* ward off strangers, outsiders and destructive powers. A *gau* in a red means "Strangers are welcome" or "powers keep off" and does not prevent any local inhabitant or power that spirit. A *gau* alone has no reason to heed the sign. It is something to say that the *gau* is at the *gau* but it is not really an *power* because it does not prevent the *gau*s from descending and taking possession of the spirit medium.

Since a *gau* which is a *huk* is also a symbol of *gau* since these include groups as far apart as the *Sai* of the Shan and the *Re*. Thus it is likely that *gau* has been known to the *Tai* before the time of the formation of the *Tai*. Before the *Tai* came to India, it is necessary to examine the wider distribution.

The star shaped bamboo in the *huk* has been found in most of the *Banians*, the *Karen*, the *Amarapura* and the *Pa-ta* (or *Pa-ta* *tau*<sup>46</sup>) the *Hinom* who live in *tau* (*Tai-lan*), the *Pai-Na*, the *Lahu* (who live in *tau*), the *Naga*, the *Karen* (*tau*), the *Karen* the *Lamet* (*tau*)<sup>47</sup> the *Karen* (*tau*), the *Pa-Mu* of *Assam*. Obviously these groups share in common the symbol in its use but also the *gau* ward for it. The *tau* signs thus reported for a variety of peoples live in northern Vietnam, in Laos, in northern Thailand and in Thailand. For this no trace has been found in South East Cambodia. In *Laos* the Cambodian

<sup>44</sup> Kaufmann, "Thread-square and Talcoo", p. 496.

<sup>45</sup> Professor E. E. Kaufmann, personal communication, 2 September, 1980.

<sup>46</sup> Kaufmann, "Thread-square and Talcoo", p. 496.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> K. G. Iizikowitz, *Lamet. Hill Peasants in French Indo-China*, Etnologiska Studier, Göteborg, 1951, pp. 54, 153, 220 and 255.

<sup>49</sup> A. W. Macdonald, "Notes sur la chasse villageoise dans l'Asie du Sud-est", *Journal Asiatique*, Volume CCXLV, Pt. 2, 1957, pp. 197-8.

people have their own specific traditions which are quite different in style and language. In this case, it is centered in a particular place, and there exist many groups representing various dialects. The language uses its own peculiar characters as mentioned above. This is not surprising as the language is a worn stream to 'keep off' all the debris of time and forget. As to the period when the people used the symbol, the evidence suggests that this occurred at least a thousand years ago in over large stretches of land in South America at the beginning of the second millennium AD.

It is to be held with pictures in A-sai pictures of Tat-tat scenes where we see several specialists in the bane that the sight might trigger off a curse. Some of these scenes showed various shapes and types of figures, others the other ones were asked if they'd seen such a sign. All A-sai Khamyavng Peasants I know, when they were asked this question, declared that they had never completely witnessed them. However, in those a Khamyavng Peasant expressed that the use of the sign and name he had just seen was that of a *taboo* in Tat-tat, a prohibition. In other words, if a Tat-tat, the peasant would say the word made sense. The Khamyavng authority has a piece of paper on which is written the Tat-tat curse and put under a *top*. The word *top* means *prohibited*. Tat-tat this Khamyavng informant could be made up of *tup* and *top*, or *prohibited person*. At first sight this resembles it by a Tat-tat-ker who is not to be far away the ritual object itself may be regarded as partly *prohibited*. Many people would prefer the standard derivation which traces the word as having originated from *bad* (bad) + *top* = *bad* (*top*) = *bad* (the here of *prohibited*).<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless the possibility that *top* in the meaning of "prohibition" may have been the original stem of *tat-tat* in the *word* *tat-tat* was denied cannot be overlooked. In *Neta* *top* is taken of the fact that the *Neat* all the message when is being across a road to warn off *raiders* during the time that *tat-tat* is to be used a *top cap*.<sup>13</sup> This *top* will have to be a number or not the Khamyavng and *Neta* words *tup* are one and the same. Presumably I would like to speculate that *tup* and *top* or may we be *top* also *wabster* *parishi* also known in various Austronesian that's all would have found their way in the international vocabulary as "taboo".

#### 4) Divination techniques

The exercises at T+ one month post-treatment at the end of chapter 4 came up with several new words and sounds made by combination of the same vowels as above. Kha and La were screaming the vowels much more. A, Au, Oo, and other words had also been taught. Now he was able to say the first three words of the chapter all three times in a row without any mistakes or repetitions.

<sup>1</sup> Porée-Maspero, *Etude sur les rités agraires des Cambodgiens*, Volume II, pp. 332-33.

<sup>2</sup> C. Notton, *Annales du Siem*, Volume I, p. 62 fn. 2.

<sup>3</sup> A. Bourliat, "Les Toy" p. 62<sup>a</sup>

The examination of the ver was also found with the Kachin and the Akha. Only the latter group however, like most others, is in contact with the Luer exogamous Tai. It is not clear enough to say he result must be the result of cultural borrowing. In the Kachin case neither necessarily indicate a measure of contact. In the first place their custom has not been described in detail and it was not established who the ritual uses of backs for and how the interprets the signs. It is possible that the two reports deal with quite different customs. Secondly there is no evidence of other aspects of the respective cultures suggesting that the peoples ever were in close contact.

The traditional explanation for case 1 is quite direct. The interview suggests that the Tai share the custom with the Laha or Khmu and the Hmong. The communities from which we can suppose this had seem to have had considerable problems and the custom of throwing from Tai peoples. Since the custom appears later in time than the Tai suggests that in this case the Tai may have been the donor and the Laha, Khmu and Hmong may have received the custom from the Tai.

The scenario of the life cycle resulted in quite special features in the case of the custom of cracking the back bones. It has been encountered amongst the Akha, the Pao, Nax, the Lahu, the Hmong and extending the range even further it seems that the Lekhae or wooden pins in bows or shield cases has been reported to be a common native practice in all these of the tribes of Thailand.<sup>21</sup> The main source for this widespread technique is China. In the Lao Chao area where the practice was encountered by missionaries. The earliest Chinese Tai records (the early parts of the *Aven Bina*) after several losses suggests that the Tai custom of cracking the bone before the spread over mainland Southeast Asia. However, it is difficult to be sure by comparing details of the actual rules of interpretation.

The custom of interpretation is unique in that it sterilized human tails and the direction of the blow which has also been noted among the Lao and the Tai seems to be similar with the Kachin. A case can be made for cultural borrowing of both customs. The Kachin certain Tai groups share the same ceremony in so far that they become a monastic sect for a number of years. These Tai wars a strong and long established tradition. Thus the Kachin were also not by using human tail but also very common and they may have learned the basis for the comparable Lao custom.

Apart from the Red Tai the Lao, Lahu and Mien it has been reported also amongst the Kachin, the Hmong and the Miao. These peoples have largely the same back bone breaking practice. The practice seems to be maximal. It is possible to suggest that the Red Tai learned it from one of their neighbours.

A Chinese Lao interpretation of the back bone breaking in the throwing of three pieces of wood is given in the literature. The resulting cracks in the surface of the wood are said to be the signs of life. It has been noted in the chapter on the Kachin that the Lao and Mien practice of the wing disease of the back bone is the same. Both open

<sup>21</sup>H. Stübel, *Die Li-Stämme der Insel Haünn*, p. 69.

and carrying the beads of the way it has burst is common to all the Chinese techniques. It indeed the two types of divination are but variants on the same theme. This would help explain its rather widely scattered occurrence which may be due to the fact that the basis of this is a. Thus far this technique has not been found amongst the Tai divination practices.

Another technique which probably first developed in China is the throwing of two broken sticks each having a curved and a straight side. This appears to be one of the simplest games, the execution of which needs no special training. It seems fairly widely spread and has been found for the Black Tai who probably learnt it from one of their neighbours. Other simple games mentioned are the fairly widespread techniques of taking a nail or yin-yue and counting the number is even or uneven or guessing whether an even or uneven number will be on the top of an egg.

An examination of the various divination practices encountered thus far shows an intricate pattern of regional distributions. Egg smashing is known in Assam, the examination of a bird's intestines and the tearing up of leaves rarer in eastern Assam and in Yunnan. The interpretation of birds in fowl's intestines can be found in a belt ranging from Assam through Burma, northern Laos, southern China to Hainan Island. These and other examples illustrate that each technique appears to have its own history. Some techniques have a venerable ancestry, back thousands of years and other forms have developed virtually the same form throughout the ages. Possibly the most remarkable aspect to emerge from the overview of divination techniques is the fact that compared to sacrificial ritual they are relatively little culture bound. Some of these techniques seem to have spread with only slight modification from one ethnic group to another.

It is possible to suggest two reasons for this phenomenon of apparently little interchangeability in many divination practices. The first one is the circumstance that all the peoples involved seem to share an interest in these matters. Amongst all the groups encountered there is a shared belief that communication can be established by invoking chance phenomena and taking the results as a message from the gods. Often the divination practices are but one of the methods used to gain contact with the unseen powers. The Ancient Tai must have also had a well developed system of communication with the here below to survive. The second possible reason for the apparent similarity of culture boundness is the fact that given the shared interest in matters of establishing free communication all divination techniques are but means to a goal and they are only as good as their results. Who is interested with what or result at any means of contacting the gods ritual systems may be - not try without apparently changing the essential features of their religion.

Just like the soundly developed shared divination practices indicate cultural contact and borrowing, a comparative study of the gods may reveal traces of such contacts. The contact must have taken place. However, it does not necessarily lead to a complete imitation and of course contact. In order to illustrate the latter a considerable number of individual borrowings is required. This is often the case in fusion may be reasonable when there are no major religious differences between cultural areas such as

ma, or life-cycle rituals or communal sacrificial rituals. The latter types comprise a much larger and more fundamental area of a culture than the former. It was clear from the sources in the literature that communal sacrificial rituals can take many shapes and forms and that there were only very few of these rituals which could be compared with those of the Tai. In a wider perspective it becomes clear that the Tai sacrificial traditions form never a separate set of customs distinct from those of most of their neighbours. This may be read as a corroboration of the premise that the Tai tradition at some stage or other in the past indeed formed a homogeneous culture and that therefore the study of Ancient Tai culture is possible through comparing the unshorned aspects of the individual Tai groups.

## PART B

### TIME-RECKONING

## ANCIENT ASPECTS OF TAI CALENDARS

In this chapter all ancient calendar types are taken into consideration namely the Chinese calendar, the Tai calendar, the three Great Indian calendar types and so-called Tai calendar types. The Tai calendar types are selected that they have been adopted either in part or in full by neighboring peoples. The subject is a very complex one, especially Tai-Austro-Asiatic which begins in India with the Assamese calendar. The name of this calendar, as well as its calendar days, months, etc., are derived from Sanskrit and Pali systems. There is nothing. Some of the Tai groups who live further eastwards may use this calendar with a different term and others known to me are known either the month or the year. In discussing the calendar types themselves the first task we should contacts which led to the birth of each particular system. If we were to write would fill several books, most establishing many links which may already be assumed with us far a massive collage. Thus it is already quite well known that the present-day Siamese and Lao calendar types have many elements in common with that of India. On the other hand the general direction of borrowing seems to be from China to Southeast Asia at least in the matter of systems of reckoning. Not only the Tai groups in northern Vietnam derive from Lao calendar systems the Vietnamese system and the Tai groups in China are not repeating the I-minated by the Chinese.

Therefore only certain aspects of Tai calendar are studied in this chapter namely those which seem to reflect an early stage development, in which appear to be not the result of relatively recent borrowing from neighboring groups. This leads us to take the point of differentiation to be present not only because of the so-called "Buddhist eras" or lists of the seven day week are by now almost wholly used, these being the result of contacts after the Tai spread over mainland Southeast Asia but also because such aspects of the reckoning have often escaped the notice of the traveler and the ethnographer and perhaps because on these features are also rare.

In case Tai groups for whom apparently unquoted features of their calendar are still in use the material is presented in the same order, namely into three parts. First the seven days. After the overview of this factual material an assessment is made regarding whether these features seen side-by-side with the so-called "Buddhist era" function in "Ancient Tai" culture. In the next chapter the results are placed into a wider perspective.

### The Ahom

The earliest and still with the Ahoms used before (and after) they entered Assam. It consists of the three calendar types of a six-year cycle known as the "Ahom calendar". This six-year cycle substantiates the 18 Buddhist years of the "Great Northern". It has often

TABLE I  
THE AHOM SEXAGENARY CYCLE

Kap Saew 1st year	Kap Mit 2nd year	Kap San 3rd year	Kap Singa 4th year	Kap Si 5th year	Kap Ngi 6th year
Dap Plow. 2nd year	Dap Knew 12th year	Dap Rao 22nd year	Dap Mut 32nd year	Dap Chow 42nd year	Dap Mao 52nd year
Rai Ngi 3rd year	Rai Saew 13th year	Rai Mit 23rd year	Rai San 33rd year	Rai Singa 43rd year	Rai Si 53rd year
Mung Mao 4th year	Mung Plow 14th year	Mung Kaew 24th year	Mung Ruo 34th year	Mung Mut 44th year	Mung Chow 54th year
Pluck Si 5th year	Pluck Ngi 15th year	Pluck Skew 25th year	Pluck Mit 35th year	Pluck San 45th year	Pluck Singa 55th year
Kat Chow 6th year	Kat Mao 16th year	Kat Plow 26th year	Kat Kaew 36th year	Kat Rao 46th year	Kat Mut 56th year
Khut Singa 7th year	Khut Si 17th year	Khut Ngi 27th year	Khut Saew 37th year	Khut Mit 47th year	Khut San 57th year
Rung Mut 8th year	Rung Chow 18th year	Rung Mao 28th year	Rung Plow 38th year	Rung Kaew 48th year	Rung Rao 58th year
Tow San 9th year	Tow Singa 19th year	Tow Si 29th year	Tow Ngi 39th year	Tow Saew 49th year	Tow Mit 59th year
Ka Rao 10th year	Ka Mut 20th year	Ka Chow 30th year	Ka Mao 40th year	Ka Plow 50th year	Ka Kaew 60th year

been described<sup>1</sup> but because of the peculiarities of the Assamese influenced system of transliteration which tends to obfuscate some of the similarities between Tai languages and Ahom<sup>2</sup> the whole cycle of sixty years is once more written out in Table I. From the manner in which this table is set out it is clear that the cycle is composed of two repeating series of terms, one series of ten found at the beginning, the other of twelve words (Kap, Dap, Rai, Mung, Pluck, Kat, Khut, Rung, Tow and Ka) are found twelve at the end of each combination (Saew, Plow, Ngi, Mao, Si, Chow, Singa, Mut, San, Rai, Mit and Kaew). The first year of a cycle is Kap Saew. The series of ten is repeated six times and the series of twelve five times before the Kap Saew combination recurs and a new cycle begins.

The position of the Ahom sixty-year cycle with respect to the Western calendar is such that 179-180 is a Dap Mut year, the forty-second year of a cycle. In traditional calendars the point in the Western year when the Ahom year changes name is half November, at the beginning of the traditional Ahom first month of the year.

<sup>1</sup> N. N. Acharyya, *The History of Medieval Assam*, Gauhati: Dutta Barphal, 1966, pp. 130-31. B. Barua and N. N. Deodhai Phukan (editors), *Ahom Lexicons*, pp. 190-3. J. N. Phukan, "A Note on Lak-ni", *Journal of the University of Gauhati*, Volume XX, 1969, Arts, pp. 67-73.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter 1, *A Note on Transliteration*. The exercise involved in the making of Table I comprised considerable work, because the sources in Ahom script,

including Ahom Lexicons, were often inconsistent in their spelling. For example, in order to decide upon a spelling for the ninth of the sixty-year cycle, it was necessary to choose between *saew* and *tow*, as well as between *chan* and *san*. *Tow* was preferred, because the variant *zaew* appeared likely to have been caused by a printing error, whilst the choice between *chan* and *san* was decided in favour of *san* by the evidence found in present-day Ahom calendars.

The Ahom word for "month" is *dm*. The twelve months of the year are, three in spring (Din Khar, Din Sati, Din Sut), three in summer (Din Ruk, Din Chit, Din Ei) and three in autumn (Din Nya, Din Sutkhar). The *Sut* is Anybody and *Nya* is a woman. These all call for a female host of these months. The first two months are not immediately clear, but they represent either the regular Tai month names and are in April and May or they are the first part of the series of numbers. Curiously used by the people is the birth order (see Volume I, Chapter 2). At present the Ahom month is reckoned in dependence on the progress of the moon. It is irregular and has been synchronized to some extent with the Assamese. In Table 2 the correspondences and lengths in days are given.<sup>1</sup> The Ahom differ in this respect from the Assamese system in that only the names given to the months, but also in the calculation of the month in each year bears. The Ahom year is dated from the New Year of the first Assamese month, Bohag, which falls in April.

TABLE 2  
AHOM AND ASSAMESE MONTHS

Ahom name	Assamese	International	Days
Din Ching	Aghon	November-December	30
Din Khar	Push	December-January	30
Din Sati	Magh	January-February	30
Din Sut	Phagun	February-March	30
Din Ruk	S.	March-April	30
Din Chit	Bohag	April-May	31
Din Ei	Jor	May-June	31
Din Nya	Ahar	June-July	31
Din Sutkhar	Shrawan	July-August	31
Din Sip	Bhad	August-September	31
Din Sut	Ahit	September-October	30
Din Sut Song	Kank	October-November	30

In the earliest parts of the Baranjas onward it is clear that the Ahom used apart from the sexagenary year cycle also a sixty-day cycle, which, since it is calculated fully independent from the movements of the sun and moon, may be called a sixty-day "week". The sexagesimal cycle of days is known by the same pairs of names as entered in the sixty-year cycle and enumerated in Table 1. Traditional Ahom priests have made a calendar in which the sexagesimal day, Jay eve, is used and according to their calculations January 1, 1980 was a Ka Plow day, or a fiftieth day in the cycle.

For the division of the Ahom day a list of specific moments as mentioned in Ahom manuscripts was collected by Dr J. N. Phukan of Gauhati University. Several of these could be readily identified with the aid of a Phakey speaker and the results are given in Table 3. At first sight the table contains but a series of expressions regarding moments of the day which give no indication of a more specific system of time reckoning. However, the sources of information are probably inversely human

<sup>1</sup> I thank Dr Phukan for letting me of it in this volume, record his list and for permitting the use

TABLE 3  
AHOM TRADITIONAL DIVISIONS OF THE DAY

Ahom expression	Description
Puu ti khuen nat ket khan	Rising, before cock's crow
Na ket khao	Cock's crow
Chao lung	Early morning
Puu luk chan	Getting-up time
Puu chak naa	Fago-washing time
Puu kang neu ban lung	Time of sunrise
Rung k n ngai	Breakfast time
Ban din	M day
Kim ban	Midday meal time
Ban khom	Evening time
Ban tuk	Sleep time

society. However, on closer inspection it will be clear that the list contains some words which appear related to an old calendar system, *tao* and *khan*, which may gain importance when they are compared with similar lists for other Tai groups.

### The Khamyang, the Phakey and the Khantri

The representatives of these groups who have lived for several generations in Assam in the past 100 years or so have no everyday purposes. On examination of the Phakey, some inaccuracies become clear. That there is no a ten-day week has been in use. No such period is mentioned, though the names of this week but in association with several others in the following list could be established: Kap, Nan, H, Mueng, Pues, Ka, Khet, Hung, Tao and Kaa. It was also recorded that fifteen days eight were solar and two were regarded as unlucky (days during which certain types of work were forbidden). Why is the ten were *kuan* days could not be remembered. A comparison between the Phakey ten-day week and the series of ten weeks already noted as part of the Ahom sexagenary cycle establishes that the two are the same.

That the Phakey once used, not only the ten-day cycle, but also the whole fully flooded sexagesimal cycle, this was proven during the second British period (1826-1857) at Nagaipatna village. A document was encountered which contained various tables for calculating lucky and unlucky events. One of the tables presents a series of twenty-six numbers, separated into twelve columns of eight and the eight latter subdivided into pairs. The twelve columns start after the lunar months beginning with the fifth month because the Phakey still starts then in April. In other words the Phakey appears to use a lunar calendar in which the first month lies in December. The pairs of numbers in these twelve days of a seven-day week may be regarded as very auspicious, which necessarily applies to which lies somewhat unlucky and which straightforwardly unlucky. Another table from the document presents two columns of fifteen each with a sign indicating its being fortunate or unfortunate. The first fifteen stand for the fifteen days of a waxing moon and the second row for the moon's waning. The table reinforces the fact that the Phakey reckoned on a lunisolar basis. The most interesting table is the calendar for the purpose of this study; however, is one from

which an auspicious day for holding a marriage ceremony can be read, because the basic unit is the full sexagesimal cycle of 60 days. Because of its interest I have transcribed the word which were in Shan script and in this transcription also by a reading given to each of the words by a Shan reading Phakey-speaker. The results are presented in Table 4.

From Table 4 it is evident that the Phakey use a sixty-day cycle made up of a decimal and a duodecimal sub-cycle, i.e. a ten-day sequence

TABLE 4  
THE PHAKEY LAKNI SYSTEM AND MARRIAGE

Kap Ceu	Nap Pao	Hai Ngii	Mueng Mao	Puek Sii	Kat Seu	Khut Singa	Hung Mut	Tao Sii	Kaa Hap
Kap Mit	Nap Kao	Hai Ceu	Mueng Pao	Puek Ngii	Kat Mao	Khut Sii	Hung Seu	Tao Singa	Kaa Mut
Kap Singa	Nap Hoo	Hai Hoi	Mueng Hoi	Puek Haa	Kat Hap	Khut Haa	Hung Hoo	Tao Hoi	Kaa Hoi
Kap Sii	Nap Haa	Hai Haa	Mueng Haa	Puek Hoi	Kat Hoi	Khut Hoi	Hung Haa	Tao Hoi	Kaa Hoi
Kap Ngii	Nap Mao	Hai Sii	Mueng Seu	Puek Singa	Kat Mut	Khut San	Hung Mao	Tao Mit	Kaa Keu

## Legend

- stands for: if married on such a day the wife will die early
- stands for: if married on such a day the husband will die early
- stands for: an auspicious day for marriage
- stands for: after bearing two children the wife will die
- stands for: the wife will die in labour
- stands for: husband and wife will not get along and separate.

is identical with the one mentioned above. The series of twelve is Cee, Pha Ngai, Mao, Su, See, Sungan, Mut, San, Hae, Mit and Kee. The days are not absolutely identical with those found in the Ahom tradition, but there are sufficient correspondences to establish that the Ahom and the Phakesh *tao* systems are closely related.

Table 4 is also of interest because of the type of symbols which are used to indicate auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. The basic symbol is a loop and each day of the cycle is marked with two loops in various combinations. If the loops are upright and so close together that they half overlap the sign is interpreted to mean that the day is good for a marriage. This sign occurs in just over one third of the cycle's days. All five other combinations being bad. It may be assumed that the loops stand for bride and groom themselves and that the sign is to be interpreted as a symbol for "harmony" or "person". Two other symbols represent "persons" - sand for "harmony" and "person". Three other symbols represent "persons" - sand for "harmony" and "person". That some such considerations abide by the use of the loop symbol is confirmed by the fact that the Yuan-ni calendar ritual tables to calculate auspicious and inauspicious marriage dates make use of the same symbol. Moreover, the symbols for "auspicious" in these tables are identical. The exact interpretation of the various inauspicious signs shows slightly differing meanings.<sup>4</sup> Understanding the hidden code in these diagrams may aid in interpreting hitherto little understood documents. Thus there exists a Bla-k-Ta manuscript which shows some "tete-béche" figures which have puzzled researchers. In the light of the above it could be argued that they may indicate "disharmony".<sup>5</sup>

The Khamtiang, the Phakesh and the Khamti gave somewhat differing lists of the traditional divisions of the day. These are enumerated in Table 5. In a nineteenth century account of the Assamese Khamti language it is

TABLE 5  
THE ASSAMESE TAI AND DIVISIONS OF THE DAY

Khamtiang	Phakesh	Khamti	Moment of Time
Kai khan			Cock's crow
Wan oek (Kaong) Loe	Hu mueng laing Kham noet Wan tong Wan chai Wan tok Pai kham Kung kham Ting khuen	Ho mueng heng (Kaung) Wan khuss Kang loe Wan teng Wan chai Wan tok Pang kham Kang khuen Teng khuen	Just before dawn Dawn Early morning Morning Midday Afternoon Sunset Evening Night time Midnight

<sup>4</sup> R. Davis, "The Northern Tai Calendar and Its Uses," *Ashoka*, Volume 7, 1976, p. 24. Another interesting variant has been noted in a group in the southern-most reaches of the Tai culture, the "Sam Sam" peoples in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula. See Ch. Arohambaud, "Enquête préliminaire sur les populations

Sam Sam de Neubat et Petris (Malaisie)", *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, Volume V, fasc. XI, A. Petri, 1959, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Y. Laubie, "Tables de tao-ma et almanaches Naga," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, Volume XXXVIII, 1938, p. 299.

stated that the day is divided into *chit* time, the *mo*, probably meaning "period" or "time," Each of these *chit* was given a Tai numeral beginning with *mua* being first period. This he reckons the end with *prue* (eighth period) later known as *ta* (the ninth). This corresponds with a 24-hour span of two hours. It should also be noted that a Kao *chit* meant roughly that long ago when a *ku* was old indicate specific moments of the afternoon to be reflected in the length of the shadow.

TABLE 6  
THE SHAN DECIMAL AND DUODECIMAL SERIES

Decimal series

Kap, Dap, Ra, Mung, Plek, Kel, Khot, Rung, Taw, Kaa

Duodecimal series

Saw, Plow, Nga, Mau, Si, Siu, Singa, Mu, San, Raw, Mit, Kuu

The Shan

The use of a sexagesary cycle made up of a decimal and a duodecimal series of names has been reported for the Shan of upper Burma in general.<sup>1</sup> The whole cycle year will not be repeated here; it suffices to present, in Table 6, the two subsidiary series. The first year of the Shan cycle, Kap Saw, undoubtedly corresponds with the Pakey Kap Ceu and the Ahom year Kap Saew.

Amongst the Shan the lunar month is the basic unit in the division of the year. The shortfall between twelve lunar months and the length of the solar year is regular, adjusted so that the first lunar month begins in November. Further details such as the exact length of each of the twelve months and the method used in adjusting to the solar year have not been found in the available literature. There is a summary account of traditional Shan divisions of the day, unfortunately only in English and omitting the equivalent Shan expressions, which is presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7  
SHAN DIVISIONS OF THE DAY

First cock-crowing time	Soon after three a.m.
Sun rising	7 A.M. or
Paddy ploughing time	Immediately before dawn
Early rice-eating	About eight a.m.
Rice eating	About noon
Evening eating	Eight p.m. or later

<sup>1</sup>J. F. Needham, *On the calendar of the Burmese*, Part V, and J. Rangam, *the Tai Almanac*, Bangkok, Government Printer, 1894, and C. Smith, *Almanac*, 1906, Government Printing, Burma, 1894, p. 211.

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<sup>2</sup>J. G. Scott and J. F. Hardiman, *Paragon Book Reprint*, 1970, p. 119 and (compilers), *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and* p. 121.

### The Lue

Very little information on the Lue calendar has been encountered in the ethnographic literature which was scanned. The only remark useful to this study is the fact that the Lue calendar is one month ahead of that of the Lao, the eleventh Lao month corresponding with the twelfth Lue Lao.<sup>9</sup>

### The Yuan

In Yuan records there is abundant evidence of a sixty-year cycle. Like the sexagenary cycles described above it is made up of a decimal and a duodecimal set of names.<sup>10</sup> They are given in Table 8. In this table the duodecimal series is provided with a list of twelve animal names. These animal names are believed to correspond with the zodiacal series. They may not be regarded as translations if words for each of these animals is known in Yuan language with a different, Tat name. The list corresponds, with the exception of the two fifth (elephant) with the well known cycle of twelve animals known throughout China and Southeast Asia. The Yuan cycle, just as the ones encountered before, begins with a Kaap Chai year. Accounts that the sixty-year cycle of Chiang Mai begins with the Kat Chai year<sup>11</sup> rest upon a misunderstanding of the nature of the Yuan cycle and they may safely be ignored.<sup>12</sup> The change from one year in the cycle to another is taken to fall at the moment of the "Indian" New Year in April. In 1980 the Yuan cycle reaches the year Kot Saa, the fifty-seventh of the sequence.

TABLE 8  
THE YUAN DECIMAL AND DUODECIMAL SERIES

Decimal series	Duodecimal series	
Kaap	Chai	(rat)
Dap	Pno	(ox)
Lway	Nyi	(tiger)
Musang	Mao	(rabbit)
Pock	Sil	(dragon)
Kat	Sai	(snake)
Kot	Sangas	(horse)
Luang	Met	(goat)
Tao	San	(monkey)
Kaa	Lao	(chicken)
	Sci	(dog)
	Kai	(elephant)

The Yuan reckon in lunar months, each month being divided into a waxing and a waning half. The first month of the Yuan corresponds with the twelfth month of the Lue and the Shan, and in this respect their calendar

<sup>9</sup> H. Deyder, *Lokopala*, p. 98.

<sup>10</sup> C. Notton, *Annales de Siam*, Volume I, p. 70, S. Egerod, "The Eighth Earthly Branch in Archaic Chinese and Tai", *Oriens*, Volume 10, No. 2, 1957, pp. 296-7 R. Davis, "The Northern Thai Calendar and Its Uses", pp. 12-3

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, C. Notton, *Annales*

*de Siam*, Volume I, p. 77, and R. Davis, "The Northern Thai Calendar and Its Uses", p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed explanation see M. Vickery, "The Lion Prince and Related Remarks on Northern History", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Volume 64, Pt. 1, 1976, pp. 342-43

Appears twice in the calendar, once in the first month and again in the third month. This is because the first month is sixteen days long and the second month is twenty-eight days long, so that the thirty days of the month fall on different days of the alternating twenty-four-day cycle. It is likely that the months visible cycle and the months of the calendar must be aligned. Moreover, since the calendar is shorter than the solar year by some eleven days, occasionally it will not be aligned. In the system used by the Yuan, there is a duplication of months every nineteen years. The month chosen for duplication is always the ninth lunar month.

The same combination of names used to indicate years, is also used by the Yuan to count a lengthy week of sixty days. The system has not yet been recorded, but it is possible to indicate modern days using this cycle. January 1, 1981 thus corresponds with a Yuan Maeang Sai day, or a fifty-fourth day of the Yuan cycle.<sup>11</sup>

### The Siamese

The first recorded Siamese system of counting years other than eras derived from Indian time reckoning is the duodecimal cycle. It can be found even in the earliest inscription of Siamese script that of King Rama Kianhaeng, dated 1233. The set of twelve names is presented in Table 9. This series represents a list of names which differs completely from those recorded in the duodecimal cycles of the Yuan, the Shan, the Phakey and the Ahom though their meaning apparently goes back to the same well-known cycle of twelve animals. Again however these names do not represent the ordinary Tai words for these animals and they appear to be of foreign origin.

TABLE 9  
THE SIAMESE DUODECIMAL CYCLE

Name	Association	Name	Association
Chuat	Rat	Mamuk	Horse
Chalou	Ox	Mamng	Goat
Khsan	Tiger	Wook	Monkey
Thoo	Hare	Baksa	Cock
Murong	Dragon	Coo	Dog
Maseng	Snake	Kuh	Pig

In the later half of the fifteenth century Siamese inscriptions occasionally contain references to a sixty-year cycle as described above for the Yuan.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Davis, "The Northern Thai Calendar and its Uses", p. 5.

would lag just over nine hours behind the actual lunation.

<sup>12</sup> R. LeMay, *An Asian Archeday, the Land and Peoples of Northern Siam*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927, p. 161.

<sup>13</sup> Calculated from the date given in Davis, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> The synodic month lasts twenty-nine days, twelve hours, forty-four minutes and three seconds, so that in a year this calendar

would lag just over nine hours behind the actual lunation.

<sup>15</sup> R. Billard, "Les cycles chronographiques chinois dans les inscriptions thaïes" *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient*, Volume LI, 1963, p. 404.

By the seventeenth century, however, a different sixty-year cycle had come into vogue.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the Chinese calendar where the sexagenary cycle is set forth above, in this Siamese system the series of twelve names now forms the first part of the year name. Moreover, the names of 11 is far replaced and the 12th cycle are not the sequence Chai, Pa, Noy, Mai etc., but the 1st and 12th in Table 9. A further difference with the sexagenary cycles encountered thus far is the fact that the 12th cycle is a series of numerical terms, derived from the Pali language. This decimal series is given in Table 10. Just like the other sexagenary systems mentioned above, the duodecimal series is repeated five times, and the general six times before a new cycle begins.<sup>19</sup>

TABLE 10  
THE DECIMAL SERIES IN THE SIAMESE SEXAGENARY SYSTEM

Bhatsok	(first year)	Chyotsok	(sixth year)
Dousok	(second year)	Sapsok	(seventh year)
Tsok	(third year)	Nuok	(eighth year)
ha watsok	(fourth year)	Na ok	(ninth year)
Pantyatsok	(fifth year)	Sa ok	(tenth year)

With respect to the Siamese subdivisions of the year the lunar month is again the basic unit. The Siamese first month begins usually in December. Apart from the first month and the second, which are respectively known as the *Aam* month and the *Yin* month, all months are numbered with ordinary Siamese numerals. The words *Aam* and *Yin* apparently are derived from the same southern-Chinese counting system which is used in kinship-numbering, described in Volume I. The odd-numbered months have twenty-nine days, whilst the even months are thirty days long. Each lunar month is divided into two halves, a waxing half known as *khuan* and a waning half *khuan raem*. In the odd-numbered months the waxing half is reduced by a day to fourteen days. When an extra day is added to a month in order to catch up with the actual duration once every four, five or six years, this day is given to the seventh month,<sup>20</sup> it has no full month of thirty days. In order to adjust the lunar calendar to the solar one seven intercalary months are added every nineteen years. This intercalary month is always added to the eighth and it may be called the "twelfth-month" or *duan song phet*. The lunar calendar is still in use in the rural Siamese countryside where people can make an appointment to meet each other, for example on the fourth day of waning moon (*wan khuen sip ha*) or on the fifteenth day of waxing moon (*wan khuen sip ha* *kham*).

<sup>18</sup> S. de la Loubère (*The Kingdom of Siam*, Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 169) had understood the duodecimal series, but had not grasped its combination with a decimal series to form a sixty-year cycle. He reports that to the words *Chaluu* and *Thoo* the word *Sapsok* is added "which I understand not, and which was added to the names of the twelfth of the years, which run then to distinguish it from the four

other twelfths of the years of the same cycle." (ibidem).

<sup>19</sup> The Siamese sexagenary cycle has been described in some detail by Pallegoix *Description du royaume d'au Siam*, Volume I, pp. 253-55, and O Frankfurter, *Elements of Siamese Grammar*, Leipzig: Niemann, 1900, pp. 137-41.

<sup>20</sup> *Bangkok Calendar*, Bangkok: American Missionary Association, 1862, p. 26.

There can be no doubt that the Siamese had a sexagesimal week system. It is mentioned by several authors, e.g. in the *Siamese Encyclopedia* (1925) and in the *Siamese Gazetteer* (1928). The *Siamese Gazetteer* states that the sexagesimal week was introduced by King Rama I in 1820. This date is also mentioned in the *Siamese Encyclopedia*. The *Siamese Gazetteer* also states that the sexagesimal week was first used in 1820, but the *Siamese Encyclopedia* gives 1821 as the year when it was first used.

century until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

In the fourteenth century the Siamese may have adopted a sexagesimal calendar system as a ten-day week. This is supported by the fact that seven day week was then already known in the court of the newly established Mon and Khmer Kingdoms. One may hardly be justified that the Siamese had a sexagesimal ten-day week, but there is some evidence that they had a sexagesimal system in the fourteenth century. A translation of the relevant passage is presented here:<sup>22</sup>

Sixty days of the cock - the ninth day of the waxing moon, the tenth day of the full moon, the eleventh day of the waning moon, the twelfth day of the new moon, the thirteenth day of the half moon, and 'katt rag' indicates that it was the forty sixth day of the sixth year cycle. Moreover, it is noteworthy that this sexagesimal system is given the epithet "Tai".

The passage is a sample of a fragment for the student of systems of time reckoning. The traditional Tai aspects are readily isolated. Thus, "year of the cock" shows it was the year in the decadal cycle, the "sixth month" is a lunar month corresponding to June-July, the "ninth day of the waxing moon" refers to the numbering system for the half months and "katt rag" indicates that it was the forty sixth day of the sixth year cycle. Moreover, it is noteworthy that this sexagesimal system is given the epithet "Tai".

Traditionally the day was divided in four equal periods, namely the intervals between dawn (*tao*), noon (*thong*), dusk (*badet*) and midnight (*chau*). The day was from the day (*tao*) the after-night (*chau*). The morning is called *tao* and the afternoon is *badet*. During the Ayutthaya period the night was divided in 'watches' of three hours duration each marked by beatings on the drum (*dam*). The night began with the "early evening beating" (*dam*) at about nine p.m. It was the time of the "first beating" (*dam*). Midnight was also known as "second beating" (*dam*, *dam*).<sup>23</sup> It appears to be primarily a military division of time. As early as the fourteenth century the Siamese began using a subdivision of the hour called the *ba*. One *ba* in turn is reckoned to last six minutes. Its meaning is not immediately clear. It was still commonly used by astrologers in the eighteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> R. H. Jord, "The cycles chronographiques de l'ancien calendrier siamais", in *Archives de l'Asie du Sud-Est*, Volume IV, Presses Universitaires de France, 1960, p. 404.

<sup>22</sup> A. B. Grawould and Prasert na Nagara, "The Epigraphy of Mahadhammaraja I of Sakkha, a biography of the King of Siam", *Siam Society Papers*, Volume 61, Part 1, 1973, p. 94.

<sup>23</sup> K. Schobinger, "Kuan Chompou et Kuan Phon", in *La femme, le bâts et le vêtement*, Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque

d'Ecole Asiatique, XXV, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1960, p. 86.

<sup>24</sup> *Prasert na Nagara*, Volume I, pp. 255,

56, J. Crawford, *Embassy*, p. 328.

<sup>25</sup> Schobinger, *Kuan Chompou et Kuan Phon*, p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> See the *Bangkok Gazette*, 1862 and following years.

**The Lao**

The Laotian calendar contains a sexagenary cycle made up of a series of ten names repeated six times and a series of twelve repeated five times in the manner described for the Anom, the Pinkey, the Shan and the Yuan.<sup>20</sup> The two series are presented in Table I. No definite information has been found on the question at what moment in the year the name used to change to a following one in the sixty year cycle. In recent centuries it seems that the beginning of the Indian astronomical year in April also served as the beginning of a year in the sexagenary cycle. More recently the beginning of the international year at January 1 has been adopted. The year 1980, according to the Lao sixty year cycle is a Kot San year, the fifty-seventh of the series.

TABLE II  
THE LAO DECIMAL AND DUODECIMAL SERIES

Decimal series	Duodecimal series
Kap	Chou
Hap	Pan
Hual	Nyi
Muong	Mao
Puek	Si
Kat	Seu
Kot	Sanga
Huang	Mot
Tao	San
Ka	Hao
	Set
	Khou

The Laotian month is lunar. The year has alternating months of twenty-nine and thirty days, the even-numbered months carrying thirty days. The first two months have names, respectively, Chou and Pan; all the other months carry one name. There are from three to twelve. The word Chiençeng is believed to stand for "early".<sup>21</sup> The word Ngi corresponds with "twelve" in the southern Chinese calendar system mentioned earlier. The beginning of the first lunar month falls between November 4 and December 12. Like the Siamese calendar, the seventh month occasionally receives an extra day so as to make up for the difference between month and actual rotation. In order to adjust the difference between twelve lunar months and the solar year, intercalary months are added from time to time. Again like the Siamese case, this intercalary month always falls immediately after an eighth month of the year and it is called "twice eighth month" or *Chum poek no noi*. These months are each divided in fifteen days waning and fourteen full moons waning month.

<sup>20</sup> Tao Maha Louna Phetsarath, "The Laotian calendar", *Kingdom of Laos*, 1, 1, 1939, pp. 100-105, L. Mendat, "La nouvelle année laotienne", *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises*, N.S., p. 102.

Volume XVI, 1943, p. 30-31 and Theo Bou-Saik, "Le calendrier", *Monographie du Royaume Lao*, Vol. VI, 1973, pp. 133-35.

<sup>21</sup> Phetsarath, "The Laotian Calendar", *Société des Etudes Indochinoises*, N.S., p. 102.

The Laotians also knew the so-called *Tha* days, and the same sixty combinations of names as in the solar calendar can be seen in Table 11. An item of information which is rather curious but of some interest in the light of the findings amongst the Pao is the fact that they used the normal series of Table 11 (i.e. undated) a regular day week, but the usual series, every Huat (third) day and every Huang (ninth) day was a rest day. This is related to the fact that every fifth day used to be a market day.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst in Olden Siam there were rooms or "watch houses" at three hours each in the Laotian countryside the "watch" is called *nyam* and lasts half that length, or one-and-a-half hours. There are four periods of the day each made up of four *nyams*, namely the period between sunrise (*thong*) to noon (*theng*), from noon until evening (*kham*), from evening to midnight (*nhue* *khuen*), and from midnight to sunrise. The names of these sixteen watches are presented<sup>21</sup> in Table 12.

TABLE 12  
THE LAOTIAN *NYAMS*

From sunrise to noon	From dusk to midnight
(1) Tuttang	(9) Tuttang
(2) Nga	(10) Daek
(3) Thae kaeo theng	(11) Thae kaeo theng
(4) Thaig	(12) Theng khuen
From noon to dusk	From midnight to sunrise
(5) Tutsai	(13) Tutsai
(6) Leng	(14) Khoa
(7) Thae kaeo kham	(15) Thae kaeo khang
(8) Phat lan	(16) Phat lan

Lao astrologers use an elaborate and very accurate system of subdivisions of the day. The smallest unit is an *ayos* which is equivalent to two-fifths of a second, ten *ayos* form a *pramee*, six *pramee* a *matthi*, fifteen *matthi* a *baat* and four *baat* one *nathu*. The *baat* is therefore equivalent to six minutes of the international system and the same as the Siamese *baat* mentioned above. The *nathu* is one-sixtieth of a twenty-four hour day.

### The Tai Neua

Only a few scattered remarks have been found on Neua time-reckoning. When Bourlet mentions that an event occurs in the third month<sup>22</sup> it may be inferred that they share the system of giving the month as a number. Of great interest is the remark that the Neua have a rest day every five days, and that no travel is permitted on such a day.<sup>23</sup> Bourlet does not reveal with what system this five-day week is counted.

Regarding the smaller units of time more details are available. The Neua appear to use fourteen separate periods in a day, and these are enumerated in Table 13.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99; and Thao Boum-Souk,

"Notre calendrier", p. 144.

<sup>22</sup> Bourlet, "Les Thay", 612.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 625.

TABLE 13  
THE TAI NEUA DIVISIONS OF THE DAY

Name	Equivalent	Name	Equivalent
(1) Ka kai	Cock's crow	(8) Khung pan	About 4 p.m.
(2) Khung bang	Sunrise	(9) Dan mat	Dusk
(3) Ko so	Daylight	(10) Chat Chao	Evening
(4) Ko det	About 8-9 a.m.	(11) Khao nam	" Curfew "
(5) Ko ka	About 11 a.m.	(12) " "	" ceip ceip
(6) Ka ngar	Midday	(13) Dal ab	M'dnight
(7) Khung tuong	About 2 p.m.	(14) Lai la	Before cock's crow

### The Black Tai and the White Tai

No references to eras or year cycles were encountered in the available literature on these groups. With respect to the beginning of a year the evidence shows considerable variation on the moment upon which the first month commences. Reporting for both the Black and the White Tai, Maspero states that their first month falls in July/August.<sup>22</sup> However Deydier, writing about one group of White Tai, mentions that their seventh month falls in September/October from which it can be seen that their first month must fall in November/December at the same time as that of the Siamese and the Laotians.<sup>23</sup>

From some of the published Black Tai manuscripts it is clear that the Black Tai know of a sexagesimal week which is made up of a decimal and a diassociational set of names. Unfortunately the decimal set of names has not been published but the diassociational set is as follows: Chao, Pau, Ny, Mao, S, San, Sangaa, Met, San, Ha, Met and Kao.<sup>24</sup>

TABLE 14  
THE BLACK TAI DIVISIONS OF THE DAY

Name	Association	Equivalent
Kogn kai	Chao	Before cock's crow
Kai khan	Pau	Cock's crow
Tuen chau	-	Rising time
Chan hung	Nyil	Daybreak
Nuong ngat	Mao	Morning cooking
Kin ngat	Sj	Morning meal
Pak pom	Sao	Communal rest
Tieng ven	Sangaa	Midday
Ngoai chai	Met	Declining sun
Nuong leng	San	Prepare evening meal
Pei ku tom huong	Hua	Duck and fowl roast
Muel	Met	Late
Muet hiong	Kao	Dark
Tieng cuan		Midnight

<sup>22</sup> H. Maspero, *Mélanges posthumes sur les religions et l'histoire de la Chine*. No. 1, *Les religions chinoises*, Publications du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque de Diffusion, Volume LVII, Paris: Civilisations du Sud, 1950, p. 175 and his "Mœurs et coutumes

des populations sauvages", *Un empire colonial français* (edited by G. Maspero), Paris: Van Oest, 1929, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Deydier, *Lokupala*, p. 233.

<sup>24</sup> Y. Laubie, "Tablette diassociative et ideogrammes à Ngu-lo", p. 298.

The Junde ima set of names is sometimes linked with a series of expressions dividing the day. In reality however several other moments of the day not at all connected with a calendar system are also known<sup>72</sup> and these are shown in Table 14.

### The Red Tai

The R. J. Tai first month must fall at a time out of the year, not very common, if there is to be a division of the day into one. This can be inferred from the fact that the time of the rice field takes place in the sixth month and that by the eighth month the rice plants have grown to such a size that the ceremony "the cracking of the rice leaves" can take place.<sup>73</sup> The months are lunar and are represented to follow the sun-manna-ide system. Robert has published an extensive list of divisors of the day<sup>74</sup> and these are presented in Table 15.

TABLE 15  
THE RED TAI DIVISIONS OF THE DAY

Name	Equivalent
K. khai mo	First cock's crow, about 1 a.m.
K. khai sang	Second cock's crow, about 3 a.m.
K. khai sau	Third cock's crow, about 4.30 a.m.
Ku khai san	Fourth cock's crow, about 5 a.m.
Ku khai san	Continuous cock's crow
Tung tao	Faint daylight
Tau ngan khuen	Sunrise
De lueng	Bright sunlight
De ka	"Ripe" or full sun
Po khae ke	Buffalo grazing, after first work
Po ka	Grazing after harrowing, 9 a.m.
Ch po ngai	Breakfast, around 10 a.m.
Chom po	Starched shadow
Chom po	One walks on his own shadow
Tiep ngi m	Midday
Se k	Early afternoon, 2-3 p.m.
Ku ke det chon khon	"Ripe" afternoon, slanting sunshine
Ch po ngi mo eng	Rice cooking, about 5 p.m.
Ku mo po ka	Feeding the pigs, ducks and fowls
Chop pau	Dusk
Chop pau nua	Dinner time for the "small" men
Chop pau buon luong	Dinner time for the rich
Chop pau ta	Time for a stroll
Chop khau mues noo	Time to return home to sleep
Luck long	Very late
Teng long non dal tuen	Having slept one may wake up
Tieng khuen	Midnight

Apart from the information on moments of time which will be discussed at the end of this chapter such a list provides most interesting expressions for the self-sufficient writer or reader of the other Tai languages. Someone who is not a native of Siamese can understand most of the Red Tai entries. "Kai khai" is "cock's crow" in both vernaculars. "Hung sup fa" may be the Siamese "hung tan" or "ring down". "Ta nghia khuen" is no doubt the same as "tawin khuen", i.e. "the sun goes up". Incidentally the author of the Red Tai calendar to whom no further proof

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>74</sup> Robert, *Notes sur les Tay Deng*, p. 80.

for the idea that the word *tawan* is derived from *tua* and *wan*, the "eye" of the day just like the Malay "Det haueng" is the Siamese "daet naeng" or "shant sunlight". The Red Tai and the Siamese have not been in contact in historical times and the fact that such lists are almost immediately mutually intelligible is a strong argument in favour of the existence of a commonerous Tai culture at the end of the first millennium A.D.

### **The Dinh**

The Dinh calendar has twelve months, there are twelve day weeks, the days have twelve hours and each hour is divided into twelve parts. Each of these divisions in twelve equal parts may be designated with the help of a cycle of twelve names. These are Chae (rat), Piao (ox), Nyien (tiger), Mao (hare), Chi (dragon), Sea (snake), Sa (horse), Pat (goat), San (ape), Tho (cock), Seat (dog) and Kaeu (pig).<sup>29</sup> The months are reported to be thirty days in length. No further details are available in the literature.

### **The Tho**

The Tho calendar is heavily influenced by that of the Vietnamese. The month of February has been adopted as the beginning of the New Year, just like the Vietnamese, and the Tho have also accepted Vietnamese eras and year names. The Tho months have twenty nine and thirty days. The name of the first month is Che or Nor but all the other months carry Tai numerals. The days of each month are also counted in Tai numerals.<sup>30</sup>

## OVERVIEW

### a) The sexagenary cycle

The complete sixty year cycle made up of combinations of a denary and a duodecimal year cycle is not even mentioned among six different Tai groups (Ahom, Phraya, Siam, Yuan, Siamese and Laotians). In Table 16 all the names from the two sub-cycles are placed next to one another, together with the obtained "true" sexagesimal "weeks". It is some other Tai groups. The Siamese year cycle has been placed at the side because it deviates so considerably from all the others and because it has been pointed out that it is atypical even of relatively recent introduction. For the sixty-day's week the Siamese also have made use of a "Yuan"-type set of names. There can be no doubt as to the fact that the system goes back a considerable time for it has been used even in the early parts of the Ahom Buring's writings going back before the thirteenth century A.D. The fact that the sixty year year is used amongst Tai peoples who have lost contact since the early spreading over mainland Southeast Asia makes it clear that it may safely be regarded as part of the Ancient Tai culture.

The sexagenary cycle is an interesting case for the cultural historian in that it shows both considerable similarities and some local deviations. The

<sup>29</sup> J. Esquiroz and G. Whitatte, *Essai de dénomination des chœurs*. Paris: M. Noury, Paris: A. Gauthier, 1908, p. xxvii. <sup>30</sup> E. Diguet, *Etude de la langue Tho*, *Annales Du Musée*, Paris: M. Noury, Paris: A. Gauthier, 1910, pp. 47-48.

TABLE 16  
THE DECIMAL AND DUODECIMAL SERIES AMONGST TAI PEOPLES

	Ahom	Phukey	Shan	Yuan	Lao	Black Tai	Dzot	Siamese
D	Kap	Kap	Kap	Kaap	Kap			E-kap-k
E	Dap	Nap	Dap	Dap	Hap			D-ap-k
C	Rai	Hai	Rai	Lway	Hai			T-ay-k
I	Mung	Moong	Mung	Mueang	Muong			M-ung-k
M	Pluck	Puck	Pick	Pook	Puck			M-ung-k
A	Kat	Kat	Kat	Kat	Kat			Ch-ak
L	Khut	Khut	Khut	Kot	Kot			S-ak
	Rung	Hung	Rung	Luang	Huang			A-ak
	Tow	Tao	Tow	Tao	Tao			N-ah-ak
	Ka	Kas	Kaa	Kan	Ka			Su b. net usok
D	Snow	Ceu	Saw	Chai	Chou	Chao	Chaeu	Chua
U	Plow	Pao	Piau	Pao	Pao	Pao	Piao	C-ao
O	Ngi	Ngi	Ngi	Nyi	Nyi	Nyed	Khaen	
D	Mao	Mao	Mao	Mao	Mao	Mao	T-ao	
E	Si	Si	Si	Si	Si	Si	Chi	M-rong
C	Chow	Sia	Sia	Sia	Sia	Sia	Sia	M-seng
I	S-ku	S-ku	S-ku	S-ku	S-ku	S-ku	Sa	M-tia
M	Mat	Mat	Mat	Met	Mat	Met	Fai	M-tac
A	San	San	San	San	San	San	Sao	W-ak
L	Rao	Hao	Rao	Lao	Hao	Hao	Tho	K-kan
	Mit	Mit	Mit	Sot	Sot	Met	Seot	C
	Kaew	Kea	Kiu	Kat	Kheu	Kud	Kaeu	Kua

most striking similarities can be read in the lists of names tabulated in Table 6. Some of the names such as the sixth name in the decimal series, and the ninth name in the duodecimal one are identical for all Tai groups where the lists have been recorded. All others are reasonably related to each other. In all the variants of the 14 sixty year cycle the names from the denary series form the parent or first part, and names from the duodecimal series a varying 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>. In all cases a small number is added to give the first variant the value. It may safely be assumed that a Tai who lived at the end of the first century A.D. would refer to the sixteenth year of the cycle as "Kat Mat". In only will probably be able to reconstruct most of the ancient calendar systems of names for the Ancient Tai.

One of the most interesting aspects of local calendar recording in this chapter concerns the actual year which is regarded as the first in a cycle. The Ahom are clearly at variance with the other groups for whom the cycle has been determined. Whilst according to the Ahom 1280 is Dap Mat or the thirty-second year of the cycle, it is Kat San or the fifty-seventh year to the Yuan and to the Laoians. This difference of fully twenty-five years is probably a good measure of the early cultural separation of the Ahom from other Tai. The Ahom appear to have adopted the complete sexagenary system long before they adopted their written system. When the *lakorn* system became fixed into the written sources for the first time they seem to have had no method of checking with other Tai groups and adopted quite a different "original year" from where to begin the cycle.

\* Phetsarath calls it the "mother name" "Calendar", p. 100 and the "child name", "The Laotian

Among the Phakes, the Yunnanese, the Tai and the Black Tai is also a strong evidence for the venerable age of the system.

As a result of the traditional Tai Tai calendar before the branching out over Southeast Asia at least fifteen different groups the various series of Tai days are found to be quite different. In the Ahm calendar the first day of January 1950 is reckoned to be a Kai Phew day or the fifth day of a sexagenimal cycle. In the Yuan calendar however the same day is reckoned as the third day of the cycle.<sup>11</sup> From the sources it seems that the Chinese went off one of the cycles. The Chinese calendar is now lost but it is clear why some primitive tribes still do it today - the primitive element hardly have used this counting way. Before they used their own calendar of 365

#### d) The ten-day and five-day week

The following notes presented above have to do with the Phakes since used a 21-day week consisting of the days of the first 20 of the ten-day series from the second to the eleventh. It has been argued that the Lai Tans have omitted the days of the 21st to the 25th in each ten-day series respectively. These individual independent strands of evidence may be taken as evidence for an Ancient Tai ten-day week. Once it is realised that the days were known as a Kau - as a Day (thus Nau Day), it is also clear why the several cycle always begins with the 21st day. The connection with the five-day week in the ten-day week is the basis and it is where the two five-day series is grafted in order to form the sexagesimal cycle.

This ten-day week must have been an important aspect of the working life not only for a few aristocrats engaged by the regular tax or had them but for the average farmers too. It is argued here that every man Tai once knew which days in the ten-day week it was because the end of the day series was divided into two halves every fifth day forming a 'sacred day' a day during which no work was done in the fields.

Evidence for the rest day every fifth day which reinforces the argument regarding the importance of the ten-day sequence comes in the form place from three sources, and also there is some corroborating evidence in astrological tables. The first reason of course is the fact that the Phakes in Assam used remember that the second series of days contains two rest days in successive days. Thus agricultural and other activities were forbidden. The second and strongest evidence is the tradition that traditionally the Lai Tai people used to half work every Friday day and every Sunday day respectively the third and the eighth of the decimal series and that it went back to the time that every fifth day used to be marked as a rest day. The third account comes from the Tai Naga calendar where it is recorded that they have a half day rest day every fifth day. These three independent reports, together with the evidence of the regular ten-day series and together with the fact that no other weeks have been found to be used for among Lai peoples other than the relatively recent seven day week suffice to make a case for the existence and importance of an Ancient Tai five-day week.

<sup>11</sup>This has been extrapolated from the date given by R. Davis, "The Northern Tai Calendar and Its Uses", p. 17.

<sup>12</sup>Calculated from tables given in R. Billard, "Les cycles chronographiques chinois", pp. 414-43.

Some corroborating evidence may be found in one of the traditional diagrams used to foretell auspicious and inauspicious moments. In an earlier publication I have reproduced and described a similar chart which I found in one of the most widespread treatises of rural Laos.<sup>43</sup> It consists of a pattern of thirty-five squares, called "khauk khong diagram". Its basic shape is reproduced in Figure 1. The diagram lists a days of the week and five periods of the day five periods for simplicity's sake named A, B, C, D and E. These five periods are given with great astronomical exactitude in the Siamese version: period A lasting from 6.15 a.m. until 8.24 a.m., period B from 8.25 a.m. until 10.45 a.m. and so forth reaching 6 p.m. at the end of period E. The same sequence may be used to divide the night. When a Siamese wishes to check whether or not a certain time is auspicious he checks on what day of the week it falls and reads across the diagram through the five types of symbols and determines which symbols coincide with his chosen time. If no dots are a very auspicious sign. Conversely if mostly inauspicious ones - such as a double square or no dots - are found, the time is inauspicious and a cross is definitely inauspicious and ominous.

	A	B	C	D	E
Sunday	• •	X		• •	•
Monday	•	• •	X		• •
Tuesday	• •	•	• •	X	
Wednesday		• •	•	• •	X
Thursday	X		• •	•	• •
Friday	• •	X		• •	•
Saturday	•	• •	X		• •
	A	B	C	D	E

FIG. 1. The Siamese "khauk khong"

The same chart has been described for northern Laos.<sup>44</sup> It contains thirty-five squares, reading from left to right and vertically mentioning the seven days of the week, beginning with Sunday. The symbols and their meaning are identical and the positions of the dots and crosses in the chart is also the same.<sup>45</sup> E on the name of the diagram corresponds with Tat of Siang, the Lao van characters read ສາວ ອະ

<sup>43</sup> B. J. Terwiel, *Monks and Magic*, p. 156.

<sup>44</sup> Pham Cong Sun, "Lieu can co dving-left blank. This must be an accidental lost left blank. This must be an accidental loss of the original manuscript. The present close Régume Lan, Volume 6, 1971, pp. 160-64 example is by the graph on p. 166.

*bukh ng*" watch Phan Cao Sua translates as "the a species and the precious watches". There is a subtle difference between the Siamese and the Lao calendar regarding the time divisions. While the Siamese have written out the five periods of twelve hours using the international clock, the Lao man example uses five letters, namely: *Ch*, "S", "T", "B", and *Y*, which stand for *chao*, i.e. "morning", *sang*, or "late morning", *theng*, "midday", *baay*, "afternoon" and *yen*, "late afternoon". Local astrologers in Lu's state that as in Siam, the intervals can also be reckoned during the night, so that the five periods then correspond with "evening", "night", "midnight", "at dawn between 6:30 a.m. and 4 a.m.", and "the time between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m.".

A close examination of both diagrams presents a few puzzling aspects. In the first place the division of the day into five periods does not readily fit into the traditional Five Systems. Following these periods, both the Siamese and the Lao astrologers seem to have "squeezed" each in their own way to make the total in the five. A division into four, or eight would have suited the well-known system of "watchers" much better. The second puzzling aspect is that the rows of symbols are ordered in such a manner that for the first five days of the week each particular period of time has a different value for each day, but Friday is a repeat of Sunday and Saturday gives the same results as Monday. This presents a certain imbalance which is also of character with most traditional charts of the region.

These problematic aspects disappear with the exception of a slightly varying form of the diagram which is also found in northern Laos and<sup>48</sup> which is here reproduced in Figure 2. A comparison between Figure 1 and Figure 2 leaves no doubt as to the fact that they are related. The one of Figure 2 also uses to test the auspiciousness or inauspiciousness of moments in the week-days. However since there are only five horizontal lines, the person who consults the diagram is advised to use the first line for both Saturday and Friday, the second line for Tuesday, the third for Saturday the fourth for Monday and Wednesday and the last line for Thursday. While the second type of diagram appears much neater than that of forty-five squares, it is not a repetition of ones of an earlier and simpler date; it apparently presents some difficulties regarding fitting in every weekday into the five available slots.

Sunday Friday	XX		..	.
Tuesday	.	XX	X	..
Saturday	..	.	XX	X
Monday Wednesday	..	.	XX	XX
Thursday	X	..	.	..

Fig. 2: A diagram from northern Laos

<sup>48</sup> Etard, "A propos d'une carte Son et des Etudes Indo-chinoises NS, Volume historique laotienne", *Bulletin de la XXXII*, 1957, pp. 377-83.

The Tai Lue calendar has been studied by  
S. S. K. Wong in his "The Tai Lue calendar" (1975).  
The Mien calendar book of An  
and the book of the Black Tai are also  
available.

Pham Cong Suu has probably been the first to recognise that the  
twelve months of the Tai calendar correspond to the twelve months of the Chinese calendar (1975). As far as I am aware, he is the first  
to have suggested that the period of five days in the period of five  
days was the same as the week. He also suggests that the week was best  
written in Chinese. When I checked his proposal of five day week  
against the Chinese calendar I found that the days of the week above are  
the same. I proposed that the week was open to the right which was  
not the case in the Chinese calendar. I also found that the twenty-five  
squared calendar had the same days in the same order as the weekly week and that  
this was because the days were numbered. Ancient Tai split  
their decimal series up into two equal parts.

### c) Divisions of the day

I can find no evidence of the division of the day amongst Tai  
peoples. This is in contrast to the Chinese calendar. Some  
Tai words for the day are similar to those of the Chinese calendar. Using  
these as criteria it seems that there can be no certainty  
because I know of no report. One such as the reference  
to the sun in the Tai calendar is not mentioned. There are a number of  
Tai words for the day. These are not immediately  
analogous to the Chinese calendar. A list of  
a few follows. I have not tried to give the precise  
for each word. It is not known why these  
such as "day", "morning", "noon", "afternoon", "early morning"  
etc. are used. The words "sun", "day", "noon" and "bed  
time". The word "bed time" is not the bed time but amongst  
Intha people it refers to the time after the bed more than under-  
standing the bed. The day and the night have been extremely linked,  
and in many Tai peoples the day is regarded an important  
positive element and the words for the day seem closely  
related amongst all Tai peoples.

Of greater interest are the words for moments in the day which are  
derived from the Chinese calendar. From the data given  
it may be inferred that the Tai day was longer than beginning at  
sunrise and shorter during the day. This is because the  
names of the months in the Tai calendar are derived from the  
days. I suspect however that the inference is that there can be a marked  
difference in the length of the day. At the moment there  
are three periods of the day which are called "light".  
Under the Tai calendar Nong, Pao, Eng, Kao, Kao.

<sup>1</sup> Y. Laubie, "Tablette divinatoire et Ideogrammes à Ngia-la", p. 296. <sup>2</sup> Pham Cong Suu, "Une canope divinatoire du nord Laos", p. 164.

Siamese *thong*, Laoian *thong*, Black Tai *teng* and Red Tai *cuon* are all related and these point to an Ancient Tai word for "midday". Similarly it can be argued that the Ancient Tai word for morning was the word for "noon" followed by the word for "ring" (Khambayang *thong khuen*, Phnay *thong khuen*, Khamtieng *khuen*). Siamese *thong khuen* has an exact kia Black Tai *theng cuen* and Red Tai *theng khuen*.

General words indicating morning time often have the word *noon* or *noon* in common. Ahom Phnay La - Black Tai Red Tai. This is significant also occurs in Siamese with the morning at *m-tong*, i.e. daylight and amongst the Tai of southern Thailand it indicates specifically the extended period of the morning from sunrise (Ba-kut 9 a.m.<sup>44</sup>) to this morning Tai names divided by the day in minutes and periods, e.g. *daeng* refers to time for human and animal activity which can be set up. The Ancient Tai began the day with a noise (*baeng* *raet*) then all went early about their business but they also had a variety setting the vehicle period between sunrise and noon (*chao*). A fixed moment in the day was taken (*theng* *taeng* *theng* *theng* *theng* *theng*), followed by the afternoon (*chao* *sak* *chao*) and dusk (*chao*). The whole period of daytime was known with a word related to *theng* *theng* and *chao* and the whole period of darkness was probably related to a word such as *kham*.

In the many lists of Tai words of the day now widespread pattern reveals a more exact and regular division of the day than before. It is quite possible that the Ancient Tai knew "hours", or "watches", but the description of these exact subdivisions thus far remains limited to the Siamese and the Lao and this does not warrant their application to the Ancient Tai method of time-reckoning.

<sup>44</sup> McFarland, *Thai-English Dictionary*, p. 223.

## THE ANCIENT TAI CALENDAR IN WORLD HISTORY

After the survey of available material on Tai methods of time reckoning, two systems in the needful respects will be considered in the literature regarding the possible origin of the Tai. As before it is not possible to prove definitely which of the Indian, the Burmese, the Chinese, the Cambodian and the Vietnamese calendar is the ancestor. The systems will be examined. The choice of 'ancestor' is guided by the findings of the present chapter. For example, so far there has been no reason to presume that the Indian calendar was the ancestor, as all references to ancient eras are of relatively recent origin, and because a sexagenary cycle has been established as earliest of all of the known periods. The sixty-year cycle has been mentioned in the chapter on the calendar literature first. Some of the other cycles, the three-day cycle, etc., will be discussed further. The Tai calendar, however, has a system of reckoning to the solar year and also has cycles of some months, weeks, days and subdivisions of days.

### SECTION 1

#### The sixty-year and the sixty-day cycles

##### a) The Indian system

In the Indian literature amongst the many references to periods of time longer than a year, there is—casually a mention of a sixty-year cycle. It is as though it is this cycle which was used during the sixth century A.D., but scholars disagree as to whether it is introduced in the Indian calendar.<sup>1</sup> It is often known as the Jovian cycle, but it was originally based upon calculations relating to Jupiter's revolution. Seen however, the difference between sixty-year and Jupiter's revolution was not so great, and the cycle must be linked to the planet's movement. The sixty years in the Jovian cycle are known to have separate names. These Sanskrit names<sup>2</sup> cannot be subdivided into series, eleven or twelve. There seem to be no links between the Tai sexagenary cycle and the Indian one.

There is, in Indian time-reckoning sometimes mention of a unit of six days and half a season, but here again there is no reason to suspect a link between it and the Tai sixty-day system.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>R. Sewell and S. B. Dikshit place the introduction of the cycle halfway the fourth century A.D. (*The Indian Calendar*, London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1896, p. 36). A. Cunningham estimates that the Jovian cycle was introduced before the Christian era (*Book of Indian Eras with Tables for Calculating Indian Dates*, Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1970, p. 18).

<sup>2</sup>A. Cunningham, *Book of Indian Eras*, p. 25 gives the full list.

<sup>3</sup>L. D. Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1964, p. 238.

### b) *The Tibetan cycle*

The Tibetan sixty year cycle is a well-known feature of their religion and calendar system which has been in use for a long time. Just like the I Ching system, the Tibetan cycle consists of two series of numbers, i.e. series of ten and other twelve. The first half repeats six times the second twelve times, the first twelve can be seen as part of the year's name. These are forming the latter part. This far the Tibetan system appears identical with the Tat. There are however also some differences. The greatest difference lies in the composition of the second set of names. They are in Tibetan also composed of only five terms, i.e. one term each later. They are given in Table 17.

TABLE 17

## THE TIBETAN SERIES OF TEN AND TWELVE NAMES

Decimal series (translated)
Wood, Wood, Fire, Fire, Earth, Earth, Metal, Metal, Water, Water
Duodecimal series (translated)
Rat, Ox, Tiger, Horse, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Sheep, Ape, Bird, Dog, Pig

These are none other than the well-known "five agents" of the Chinese system for reckoning. Another difference with the Tat system is that the Tibetan cycle is reckoned to begin with a Fire Horse year, reputedly in the year 1027 A.D.<sup>4</sup> whereas the Tat cycle begins with a combination of years equivalent to the Tibetan Wood Rat. According to the Tibetan way of reckoning 1027 is a Fire Horse year in the sexagenary cycle which does not correspond with any of the twelve dates indicated. Finally, the Tibetans use the system only to calculate years and do not extend the system to cover a set of sixty days.

Apparently the Tat and Tibetan systems are related in that both peoples have derived them from the same source. However they diverge sufficiently especially in the century's b-series to warrant the conclusion that the Tibetans and the Tat did not adopt the system at the same time.

### c) *Mon and early Burmese cycle*

From about the tenth century A.D. onward there is an occasional reference in Mon and later in Burmese sources which indicate the knowledge and use of a twelve year cycle.<sup>5</sup> The names of the twelve years are apparently derived from Pali names which originally belonged to lunar months and therefore there seems to be some link with the Tat calendar. In addition there is no sign of the use of a sexagenary cycle or of a sexagesimal day-cycle in Mon and Burmese inscriptions. The Mins, especially those

<sup>4</sup> Further details can be found in "Year Names", *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Volume XII, Pt. 2, 1922, p. 80, G. H. Luce, *Old Burma - Early Pagan*, Volume II, Locust Valley J. J. Augustin 1969, p. 310.

<sup>5</sup> J. S. Purnival, "The Cycle of Burmese

With the first two, the  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  terms are identical, so we can ignore them. The third term is  $\frac{1}{2} \alpha^2 \sin^2(\theta) = \frac{1}{2} \alpha^2 \left( \frac{\pi}{2} \right)^2 = \frac{\pi^2 \alpha^2}{8}$ . This is the same as the energy of the first excited state of the hydrogen atom.

### **3) The Akbar**

1  
I like As I do they come back with  
The old war stories updates to be done  
and we have a being on the list  
And still I have a hard time to  
see if one was born of them ever having  
seen my son Gary since I last left him time reckoning

### c) The Khmu, the P'u Noy and the Lamei

It has been reported that they use a sixteen-day cycle. This  
cycle, which results in two days in the Julian dates from the  
beginning of the calendar, the Khmu' calendar does not exceed  
forty days, nor have they yet completed the full list. The Khmu' sixteen-day  
cycle starts with the first day of April, and there is no doubt that these dates do not represent  
just one full twelve-year cycle, as is indicated by the Khmu' seem to  
use all the day names, other than the six even names are Kap-Sangha,  
Rap-Mot-Rau-San-Mien-Rao, Black-Kit-Go-Kitch, Rua-Pao-  
Piao-Ti-Ny-Ka-Me-Kam-S-Rao-Si-Roa-Sangha-Meeng-Met, Black-  
San-on-Ka-R. It is clear that all these names are derived from the  
full twelve-year or sixty-day sequence as known amongst the Tai  
Assam, and it is not surprising to find such a remarkable resemblance. The names  
from the first to the thirteenth names correspond to the traditional  
Lao calendar, but the four last names correspond to the seven-day  
system strongly suggests that the Khmu' week of sixty days is 'week',  
and that they share with the Tai all the days of the sixty days. The  
account provides sufficient evidence to establish both the week and the  
sixty days series, which have been established in the Khmu'. The  
fact that the Khmu' possess yet a proto-Chinese system is not based  
only on the fact of the use of the proto-Chinese characters, but also on the  
fact that their calendar is observed in the month of November. That the Khmu'  
use a six-year cycle and that the same calendar is also used by  
the Tai.<sup>10</sup>

The P.N. also know the other members who are reported to have borrowed the car from Dato' at his own place a few days ago. The car is a Toyota Corolla sedan.

<sup>1</sup> G. Coedes, "L'origine du cycle des douteux animaux au Cambodge", *Tōang Pao*, 1931, Volume XXVIII, p. 319.

\* C. Durrusie (editor), *Archaeological Survey of Burma, Epigraphic Memoirs*, Volume I, Part II, Rangoon Government Printing, 1960, p. 104 et seq.

*A Bernatzik Anthology, Volume 2*

P. 434.

<sup>14</sup> H. Roux and Tran Van-Chu, "Lea Tsa Khmu", p. 184.

<sup>24</sup> C. Notton, *Annales de Siam*, Volume I, p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> H. Roux, "Deux tribus de la région de Pongalay", pp. 488-89.

The Lamer know a six-day week held in use for ordinary keeping track of the days - stopping it when we wish to calculate a day in auspicious auspices. A three or the two groups of days to have taken to be six. Sixty names of the Tai peoples follow below, by their features of the culture. In Tab. 18 the second and third column of names which could be extrapolated from the data are given for these three minority groups.

TABLE 18  
DECIMAL AND DUODECIMAL NAMES AMONGST  
KHMu P'U NOI AND LAMET

DECIMAL			DUODECIMAL		
KhMu	P'u Noi	Lamer	KhMu	P'u Noi	Lamer
Kap	Kap	Kap	Cho	Cho	Toch
Rap	Hap	Rap	Phau	Pau	Phau
R	R	R	N	N	N
Museng	Museng	Mwng	Mau	Mau	Mau
Buk	Buk	Pluk	Si	Si	Si
Kut	Kut	Kut	S. ga	S. ga	S. ga
K'	K'	K'	S. ba	S. ba	S. ba
Rwung	Rwung	Rwng	M	M	M
Tau	Tau	Tau	San	San	San
Ka	Ka	Kaa	Rou	Hou	Rau
			Sot	Sot	Sot
			Go	Kho	Kuu h

### (f) The Chinese system

The Chinese have used a sexagesimal cycle since before a series of ten and one of twelve times since early times. The first day in the names in both the series probably dates back to the earliest forms of Chinese writing in several instances may have been truncated a few thousands of years before our era.<sup>13</sup> The series of ten names became known as the "ten heaven stems" or as the "ten celestial stems" as contrasted as the "twelve earthly branches".<sup>14</sup> The ten stems were related to "five agents" in a complex way (Table 1). The Chinese calendar cycle was formed by combining the two series names in the order I sequence always being placed at the beginning of the series. The second is set at the end (hence the imagery of "stems" and "branches"). In Han times this series was also used at the time of state affairs. Some thirty later probably from the first half of the first century A.D. onward the system was extended to make a cycle of sixty years. The two series became the basis of an intricate system of time keeping. The first two years of each season were calculated based on two specific days of the year. In series each season commencing with a particular stem. This gave rise to the system of the "twelve earthly branches" which will be seen below. The "twelve earthly branches" became used to mark the

<sup>13</sup> K. G. Iakowitz, *Lamer Hill Peasants* in *French Indochina*, pp. 171-72. <sup>14</sup> W. Th de Bary, Wing-tshu Chen and B. Watson (compilers), *Sources of Chinese History*, Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Press, 1960, pp. 221-2.

<sup>15</sup> Ho Ping-Ti, *The Cradle of the East*, Translated, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, p. 236 ff.

TABLE 19  
THE "TEN STEMS", "FIVE AGENTS" AND "TWELVE BRANCHES"

Ten stem	Five agents	Twelve branches	
		Tzu	(rat)
I	Wood	Ch'ou	(ox)
Ping	Fire	Yin	(tiger)
Ting		Mao	(hare)
Mou		Ch'en	(dragon)
Chi	Earth	Ssu	(snake)
		Wu	(horse)
Keng		Wei	(goat)*
Hsi	Metal	Shen	(monkey)
Jen		Yu	(cock)
Kuei	Water	Hsu	(dog)
		Hai	(boar)

\*De Bary (*ibid.*) associates the sign Wei with "sheep", but I prefer to use "goat". For arguments in favour of the latter see E. Porée-Maspero, "Le cycle des douze animaux dans le Ca-nom", in "Mémoires de l'École Franoise d'Extrême-Orient", Vol. 1, 1906, p.

position of the planet Jupiter in each year of its twelve year cycle. The twelve branches were also used to divide the day into twelve-hour periods. The association of the twelve branches with the twelve animals, as enumerated in Table 19, goes back also at least to Han times.<sup>18</sup>

The various stages in the sexagenary system's development have therefore been discussed in early China. There can be little doubt as to the historical validity of the Tai system, which is derived from the Chinese. Research has indeed proved that the Tai system contains elements archaic aspects. Liang Kai has decided on a comparison of a series of lists of zodiacal animals' names that the Tai system uses these Chinese terms but later than the 1st century A.D. Moreover, it may be inferred from the correspondence between the Tai calendar and the calendar of calculation, namely from sets of the Chinese system and not in directly via systems already adapted to other cultural traditions.<sup>19</sup>

The question should be argued, but the fact that the year cycle of the Chinese calendar is absolutely identical with that of the Yuan and of the Tai (1980 being the 17th year in the cycle, in all three instances), is another piece of evidence of the close links between the Chinese and the Tai cycles and that the Ancient Li must have derived this feature directly from the Chinese. As the evidence stands at present no such weight may be given to the correspondence. It has been shown that the Yuan cycle is built of steps of twenty-one years. It is therefore quite possible that other Tai systems, including those whose components belong to Yuan and the Tai, may well also contain a step and that the intermediary objects between Sichuan and China were an easier way for bringing the cycles.

There remains a puzzle, as far as the Chinese and the Tai sexagenary systems have been compared. Why do they lack lists of names

<sup>18</sup> Tung Tso-Pin, *Chronological Tables of Loan Words in the Tai Languages*, *Chinese History*, Volume 1, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1960, p. vi.

<sup>19</sup> Li Fung-Kuei, "Some old Chinese

*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Volume 8, 1944-45, pp. 333-42.

are clearly related to each other with different names for each set. Chinese words, the dozen set of Tai were known to all by the time of the well-known Chinese set, see Fig. 18. Various sets of ten names have been recorded in Tables 6 and 18 above. From a very early date the set of names which are eight days back to April, Tai, may be assumed that these ten names are similar to the ones we see in the following and they adopted the sexagesimal system for the first time.

Two possibilities present themselves as to the origin of these ten names. The first one is that they were variants of the "ten heavenly stems" in that the evolution of the calendar may have gone into the sexagesimal system before the Tai. The second is that the system The second evolution of the calendar in Europe, which may have had a series of names, and so on, from Monday to Sunday and that they could have been associated with the twelve animals in order to form a twelve-day week. This is the likely hypothesis, and after research is needed to prove this. There are two main sets of ten.

### g) The Hmong system

Although Savuma is of the opinion that the Hmong do not possess a proper calendar,<sup>1</sup> later on in his book he states that "in Nang Chundarsi reports that the Hmong have a twelve-day week of the year and that they also have a twelve-day week of the month and a twelve-day week of the year".<sup>2</sup> This is probably what he means by the "twelve day week" in Table 20. The etymology seems to be that the Hmong have a twelve-day week of twelve names. Apparently it is derived from the Chinese "Twelve Branches" system of names. It is indicated by the known names and the names of the twelve animals. It is possible to assume that the twelve names of the month that the first ten names passes to Table 20. The last four are suitable for the last ten and the last ten the twelve day week. The last names from 4

TABLE 20  
THE HMONG TWELVE-DAY WEEK

First week	Second week	Remainder	Animal
Gao-pi	Ga-gao-pt	Ga-hing-gao-jl	Chicken
Gao-ploa	Gie-gao-ploa	Gie-hing-gao-nta	Dog
Pi	Pi	Hing-gao-nta	Pig
Gao	N	N	Rat
Ji	Ji-gao-hyl	Ji-pi-je	Ox
L	Lo-gao-jea		Tiger
Y	Ylong-hing-gao		Rabbit
N	Nung-hing-gao-l		Dragon
H	el long-hueng-gao-qa		Snake
Y	Yzang-hu ng-gao-pi		Horse
I	La-hing-gao-ploa		Goat
			Monkey

M. S. M. *Histoire des Miao*, p. 29. B. P. ...  
"Nang Chundarsi, *The Religion of the Hmong Njua*, pp. 58-59

revenue growth will be driven by the company's ability to increase its market share in the highly fragmented Indian market. The company has already started to implement a strategy of consolidating smaller players through acquisitions and strategic partnerships. This will help the company to achieve economies of scale and improve its operational efficiency. The company also plans to expand its product range and explore new markets in the future.

### b) The Muong

The May Northern Year is placed before the small set of parades. The first day of the year is the first day of the new calendar month, which is also the start of the year. This is the date of the new year. The second day of the year is the second day of the new year. The third day of the year is the third day of the new year. The fourth day of the year is the fourth day of the new year. The fifth day of the year is the fifth day of the new year. The sixth day of the year is the sixth day of the new year. The seventh day of the year is the seventh day of the new year. The eighth day of the year is the eighth day of the new year. The ninth day of the year is the ninth day of the new year. The tenth day of the year is the tenth day of the new year. The eleventh day of the year is the eleventh day of the new year. The twelfth day of the year is the twelfth day of the new year. The thirteenth day of the year is the thirteenth day of the new year. The fourteenth day of the year is the fourteenth day of the new year. The fifteenth day of the year is the fifteenth day of the new year. The sixteenth day of the year is the sixteenth day of the new year. The seventeenth day of the year is the seventeenth day of the new year. The eighteenth day of the year is the eighteenth day of the new year. The nineteenth day of the year is the nineteenth day of the new year. The twentieth day of the year is the twentieth day of the new year. The twenty-first day of the year is the twenty-first day of the new year. The twenty-second day of the year is the twenty-second day of the new year. The twenty-third day of the year is the twenty-third day of the new year. The twenty-fourth day of the year is the twenty-fourth day of the new year. The twenty-fifth day of the year is the twenty-fifth day of the new year. The twenty-sixth day of the year is the twenty-sixth day of the new year. The twenty-seventh day of the year is the twenty-seventh day of the new year. The twenty-eighth day of the year is the twenty-eighth day of the new year. The twenty-ninth day of the year is the twenty-ninth day of the new year. The thirtieth day of the year is the thirtieth day of the new year. The thirty-first day of the year is the thirty-first day of the new year.

On May 11, 1953, came the first story of the twelve-year-old *Le Monde* (Paris) about the Khmer as Southeast Asian dialects. For of the Mien dialects, it's advisory vernacular is still the Khmer and the Chinese is very like Khmer adopted also in the early 19th century A.D. The author is of great interest as he relates the whole the Khmer were introduced to the written system of Pali writing. It seems to have come from the Chinese who were bringing the students from the Khmer people to study. It is then he feels — that the Mien must be regarded as assimilated by the Khmer for a lack of civilization. Bored et has clearly stated that the Chinese involved reflected him to Muong, says:

## ④ The Vietnamese

The Vietnamese possess a coin year cycle made up of a Denary set and a series of subsidiary numbers. I have taken it in the manner of the Chinese system for convenience. The coin values are given in Table 21, together with their associations. The most interesting aspect for the purposes of this study is the fact that the calendar is apparently based upon the Chinese calendar. Vietnamese coinage follows the split month calendar, but the first two months of the year feature the same number that same force, harnessed by man.

<sup>11</sup> J. Cutcher, *Les Mifong*, pp. 502-5.

— G. Coedès, "L'origine du cycle des douze animaux au Cambodge", p. 229.

"On this strand, see E. Chevalier's "Le cycle littéraire des douze apôtres."

*Young Fao*, Volume VII, 1906, pp. 51-122.

<sup>1</sup> P. K. Benedict, *Anato-Thai Language and Culture*, New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1975, n. 121.

TABLE 21

## THE VIETNAMESE SERIES OF TEN, THE SERIES OF TWELVE AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

Decimal		Duodecimal	
Series	Association	Series	Association
Gap	Salt water	Ti	Rat
Ai	Water from a well	Suu	Buffalo
Binh	Lightning	Dan	Tiger
Dinh	Incense	Meo	Cat*
Mau	Living tree	Thin	Dragon
K	Timber	Ti	Serpent
Canh	Material	Ngo	Horse
Tan	Metal vase	Mal	Goat
Nham	Virgin lands	Than	Monkey
Qui	Cultivated land	Dau	Cock
		Tuat	Dog
		Hoi	Pig

\*Apparently the word Meo, association "Hare", of the original system became confused with a local word for "cat".

The Vietnamese system of "Five agents" <sup>10</sup> differs from that of the Chinese in that the order of agents has been changed. Originally the sequence was Water, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water, but in Vietnamese it is Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Water. A comparison of the Chinese and Vietnamese systems reveals that both the Chinese elements are also associated in pairs with those of the Vietnamese and these associations are quite probably identical. I shall illustrate by a comparison with the Chinese system only. In the chapter I listed new words, almost fitting in with the original model. With regard to the duodecimal set of names, the Vietnamese also know this is also a very close relative of the Ming system mentioned above which is shared with the Cambodians and Siamese peoples. The Vietnamese cycle runs exactly like that of the Chinese (and Yuan and Taotian) 1980 being a very seventh year.

ii) *The Khmer cycle*

The Cambodian calendar cycle is virtually identical with the one described for Siam and cited in Table 16 above. There can be no doubt that there has been close interaction between Khmer and Siamese in the establishment of that cycle. The twelve-year cycle had been introduced at a very early age via the Cambodians to Siam. Later the Pali-based century set was modelled probably upon Siam's model of an initiation of the same 100-year cycle as operated amongst other Tai peoples. The result was a century cycle very similar to Siam's set. This cycle is not regulated so as to run in accordance with that of the Chinese.

<sup>10</sup> The list of associations can be found in pp. 256-59. A somewhat garbled version A. Schneider, *Les institutions communales en basse-Cochinchine avant la conquête française, et Culture of Vietnam*, Rutland-Tuttle, Volume II, Saigon Claude & Cie, 1901, 1966, p. 186

## SECTION 2

## The lunar calendar

## a) The Indian system

The Indian calendar possesses a complication which has caused the movement of the moon. This long year begins on the first day of the waxing moon of the month Chaitra, which falls late March or beginning April, always before New Year's Day. In contrast, according to the Indian solar year taken into England, A lunar calendar, it is adjusted with intercalary months after every three years of the solar year. Whenever there are two new moons while the sun moves in the same sign of the zodiac a month is inserted. There is also, owing to the Indian system, intercalary months may fall at any time of the year and occasionally a third year occurs so that the total starts already to the solar reckoning. With respect to the number of days of the lunar month, the Indian calendar follows the rule of the twelve months, the twelve months consisting of either thirty or twenty-nine days, a pre-designed system of "long" and "short" months. The duration of each waxing and each waning month is fixed. They are known by their names and have themselves a name, such as the month of the elephant, etc. A waxing or increasing month has sixteen days, a decreasing month fifteen days.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly the calendar year is calculated from the basis of that of the Tai.

## b) The Burmese system

The Burmese lunar calendar shows a mixture of Indian influences. It has twelve months, plus one month to account for the first waxing day of the year. This is called the month of the dragon, and it comes at the end of the year, as well as before the beginning of the new year calendar. Thus the Burmese calendar months are counted as that very long twenty-nine month. All waxing months have 30 days, and are numbered, held twelve days and the waning months thirteen days, dependent on whether the month is "short" or "long". Moreover, the intercalary month is placed at a regular point in year, namely between the fourth and fifth Burmese months, i.e., the ninth month. An intercalary month is added seven times in nine-year cycle, the system selected is that the ninth month is added in the second, fifth, seventh, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth and fourteenth year of the numerical reckoning. The month is always added at the time needed to adjust the calendar to the solar calendar, average 127 days after the last year has been completed, and the third month, Nam.

There are some differences between the Burmese lunar calendar and that of the Tai, about the length of the months, the former period

<sup>21</sup> R. Sewell and S. B. Dikshit, *The Indian Calendar*, pp. 31-32 and J. F. Fleet, in his review of A. M. B. Irwin, *The Burmese and Arakanese Calendars*, in *The Indian Antiquary*, October 1910, pp. 250-56.

<sup>22</sup> Cunningham, *Book of Indian Eras*.

<sup>23</sup> Shway Yoe (pseud. J. G. Scott), *The Burman His Life and Nations*. New York: Nelson, 1963, pp. 349-52. See also J. F. Fleet, "Review", p. 252.

here. The extra day needed to adjust the lunar months caused by a difference in the mean solar year from the solar period of one year for the 12 months can be compensated probably by a leap day. This is done in the Burmese calendar. The same can be said for the insertion of a month. If the calendar begins in the third month of the Burmese fourth month, it is necessary to add a month at the end of the Burmese fourth month. This is done. In fact, if the year were longer, it would be necessary to do so more often and it could be argued that the fact that the systems are regular, it may be considered that the reasons relating to the Indian calendar described above are not valid, since they are misleading and not based upon a consideration of the full facts.

To conclude, the last of the three considerations is that the year is to be measured from the beginning of the T渃 season in the Burmese calendar. But we have other reasons to trace. Apparently these names are derived from the names of months in the old calendar, but also they form a set unlike any other found in the literature. For instance, *Tawky* (Tawky) — *Naung* (Naung) — *Nayin* (Nayin) — *Maung* (Maung) — *Thathin* (Thathin) — *Pahto* (Pahto) — *Tabodwe* (Tabodwe) — *Tabaung* (Tabaung). It is to these names that my opinion will be applied. This is why they are listed in Table 22 in the old form of column 1 and in modern spelling in column 2.

TABLE 22  
BURMESE MONTHS THEIR NAMES IN OLD AND MODERN SPELLING

Old Burmese	Modern Burmese	Time of the year
Tankha (Tangka)	Tugu	M—Apr.-May
Kuchun (Kachun)	Kusong	Apr.—May
Namyin	Nayong	M
Mlwnita	Waun	—
Namka	Wagun	—
Tuinalang (Tawky)	Tawky	Apr.—Sept.
Santu	Thathin	Sept.—Oct.
Tanchongtun	Thalingyut	Oct.—Nov.
Nattaw	Thadingyut	Oct.—Nov.
Piasew (Piusuw)	Norlaw	Nov.—Dec.
Tapuiwhway	Pyatho	Dec.—Jan.
Tapong	Tabodwe	Jan.—Feb.
	Tabaung	Feb.—Mar.

### c) *Akha* and *P'u Nai* months

The information available on minority groups of man and South-east Asia is not very extensive on the subject of the yearly calendar. It is said that the Akha knew a month of thirty days.<sup>21</sup> It would be necessary to find out whether they also had a leap month calendar and how they resolved that and so at years to even never before that after millions of years. Of greater interest is the remark that the Akha New Year is celebrated four days before now in the month October in May.

<sup>21</sup> Cunningham, *Book of Indian Eras*, 328-29  
p. 71.

<sup>22</sup> The list of old Burmese names is a summary from a larger list in Luce, *Old Burma — Early Pagan*, Volume II, pp.

<sup>23</sup> Barnatzik, *Akha and Meo*, Volume 2,  
p. 433.

<sup>24</sup> *Idem*

more details are known, the information can be understood.

feature from the Laotians, rather than the Lue. On the other hand it is possible that a similar feature existed in the calendar of the Lue. In December before the new year was established it was found out to be likely to have been a feature of the Ancient Tai calendar. The P'au N'auas were the first to do this. They said that the Lue people had a five day week. This was the case till about 1850. Every 15 or 16 years or more, they would change their calendar so that there would be a month available for the P'au N'auas to have a five day week.

#### ④ The Chinese lunar months

In the same way, new means do not  
exist, but the old ones are still available.  
An intercalary lunation bears the name of the antecedent one.

of a much larger number of "animal" constellations to mark months.

The frequency of adding intercalary months was decided after the discovery of the calendar cycle. There are no records of the calendar system before the year 1980, so it is not possible to determine exactly when the first intercalary month was added. However, it is known that the calendar was used from the early days of the Republic. The first intercalary month was added in the year 1980, and since then, every four years, there has been an intercalary month. The years between the intercalary months are called leap years. The leap years are the years 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020, 2024, 2028, 2032, 2036, 2040, 2044, 2048, 2052, 2056, 2060, 2064, 2068, 2072, 2076, 2080, 2084, 2088, 2092, 2096, 2100, 2104, 2108, 2112, 2116, 2120, 2124, 2128, 2132, 2136, 2140, 2144, 2148, 2152, 2156, 2160, 2164, 2168, 2172, 2176, 2180, 2184, 2188, 2192, 2196, 2200, 2204, 2208, 2212, 2216, 2220, 2224, 2228, 2232, 2236, 2240, 2244, 2248, 2252, 2256, 2260, 2264, 2268, 2272, 2276, 2280, 2284, 2288, 2292, 2296, 2300, 2304, 2308, 2312, 2316, 2320, 2324, 2328, 2332, 2336, 2340, 2344, 2348, 2352, 2356, 2360, 2364, 2368, 2372, 2376, 2380, 2384, 2388, 2392, 2396, 2400, 2404, 2408, 2412, 2416, 2420, 2424, 2428, 2432, 2436, 2440, 2444, 2448, 2452, 2456, 2460, 2464, 2468, 2472, 2476, 2480, 2484, 2488, 2492, 2496, 2500, 2504, 2508, 2512, 2516, 2520, 2524, 2528, 2532, 2536, 2540, 2544, 2548, 2552, 2556, 2560, 2564, 2568, 2572, 2576, 2580, 2584, 2588, 2592, 2596, 2600, 2604, 2608, 2612, 2616, 2620, 2624, 2628, 2632, 2636, 2640, 2644, 2648, 2652, 2656, 2660, 2664, 2668, 2672, 2676, 2680, 2684, 2688, 2692, 2696, 2700, 2704, 2708, 2712, 2716, 2720, 2724, 2728, 2732, 2736, 2740, 2744, 2748, 2752, 2756, 2760, 2764, 2768, 2772, 2776, 2780, 2784, 2788, 2792, 2796, 2800, 2804, 2808, 2812, 2816, 2820, 2824, 2828, 2832, 2836, 2840, 2844, 2848, 2852, 2856, 2860, 2864, 2868, 2872, 2876, 2880, 2884, 2888, 2892, 2896, 2900, 2904, 2908, 2912, 2916, 2920, 2924, 2928, 2932, 2936, 2940, 2944, 2948, 2952, 2956, 2960, 2964, 2968, 2972, 2976, 2980, 2984, 2988, 2992, 2996, 3000, 3004, 3008, 3012, 3016, 3020, 3024, 3028, 3032, 3036, 3040, 3044, 3048, 3052, 3056, 3060, 3064, 3068, 3072, 3076, 3080, 3084, 3088, 3092, 3096, 3100, 3104, 3108, 3112, 3116, 3120, 3124, 3128, 3132, 3136, 3140, 3144, 3148, 3152, 3156, 3160, 3164, 3168, 3172, 3176, 3180, 3184, 3188, 3192, 3196, 3200, 3204, 3208, 3212, 3216, 3220, 3224, 3228, 3232, 3236, 3240, 3244, 3248, 3252, 3256, 3260, 3264, 3268, 3272, 3276, 3280, 3284, 3288, 3292, 3296, 3300, 3304, 3308, 3312, 3316, 3320, 3324, 3328, 3332, 3336, 3340, 3344, 3348, 3352, 3356, 3360, 3364, 3368, 3372, 3376, 3380, 3384, 3388, 3392, 3396, 3400, 3404, 3408, 3412, 3416, 3420, 3424, 3428, 3432, 3436, 3440, 3444, 3448, 3452, 3456, 3460, 3464, 3468, 3472, 3476, 3480, 3484, 3488, 3492, 3496, 3500, 3504, 3508, 3512, 3516, 3520, 3524, 3528, 3532, 3536, 3540, 3544, 3548, 3552, 3556, 3560, 3564, 3568, 3572, 3576, 3580, 3584, 3588, 3592, 3596, 3600, 3604, 3608, 3612, 3616, 3620, 3624, 3628, 3632, 3636, 3640, 3644, 3648, 3652, 3656, 3660, 3664, 3668, 3672, 3676, 3680, 3684, 3688, 3692, 3696, 3700, 3704, 3708, 3712, 3716, 3720, 3724, 3728, 3732, 3736, 3740, 3744, 3748, 3752, 3756, 3760, 3764, 3768, 3772, 3776, 3780, 3784, 3788, 3792, 3796, 3800, 3804, 3808, 3812, 3816, 3820, 3824, 3828, 3832, 3836, 3840, 3844, 3848, 3852, 3856, 3860, 3864, 3868, 3872, 3876, 3880, 3884, 3888, 3892, 3896, 3900, 3904, 3908, 3912, 3916, 3920, 3924, 3928, 3932, 3936, 3940, 3944, 3948, 3952, 3956, 3960, 3964, 3968, 3972, 3976, 3980, 3984, 3988, 3992, 3996, 4000, 4004, 4008, 4012, 4016, 4020, 4024, 4028, 4032, 4036, 4040, 4044, 4048, 4052, 4056, 4060, 4064, 4068, 4072, 4076, 4080, 4084, 4088, 4092, 4096, 4100, 4104, 4108, 4112, 4116, 4120, 4124, 4128, 4132, 4136, 4140, 4144, 4148, 4152, 4156, 4160, 4164, 4168, 4172, 4176, 4180, 4184, 4188, 4192, 4196, 4200, 4204, 4208, 4212, 4216, 4220, 4224, 4228, 4232, 4236, 4240, 4244, 4248, 4252, 4256, 4260, 4264, 4268, 4272, 4276, 4280, 4284, 4288, 4292, 4296, 4300, 4304, 4308, 4312, 4316, 4320, 4324, 4328, 4332, 4336, 4340, 4344, 4348, 4352, 4356, 4360, 4364, 4368, 4372, 4376, 4380, 4384, 4388, 4392, 4396, 4400, 4404, 4408, 4412, 4416, 4420, 4424, 4428, 4432, 4436, 4440, 4444, 4448, 4452, 4456, 4460, 4464, 4468, 4472, 4476, 4480, 4484, 4488, 4492, 4496, 4500, 4504, 4508, 4512, 4516, 4520, 4524, 4528, 4532, 4536, 4540, 4544, 4548, 4552, 4556, 4560, 4564, 4568, 4572, 4576, 4580, 4584, 4588, 4592, 4596, 4600, 4604, 4608, 4612, 4616, 4620, 4624, 4628, 4632, 4636, 4640, 4644, 4648, 4652, 4656, 4660, 4664, 4668, 4672, 4676, 4680, 4684, 4688, 4692, 4696, 4700, 4704, 4708, 4712, 4716, 4720, 4724, 4728, 4732, 4736, 4740, 4744, 4748, 4752, 4756, 4760, 4764, 4768, 4772, 4776, 4780, 4784, 4788, 4792, 4796, 4800, 4804, 4808, 4812, 4816, 4820, 4824, 4828, 4832, 4836, 4840, 4844, 4848, 4852, 4856, 4860, 4864, 4868, 4872, 4876, 4880, 4884, 4888, 4892, 4896, 4900, 4904, 4908, 4912, 4916, 4920, 4924, 4928, 4932, 4936, 4940, 4944, 4948, 4952, 4956, 4960, 4964, 4968, 4972, 4976, 4980, 4984, 4988, 4992, 4996, 5000, 5004, 5008, 5012, 5016, 5020, 5024, 5028, 5032, 5036, 5040, 5044, 5048, 5052, 5056, 5060, 5064, 5068, 5072, 5076, 5080, 5084, 5088, 5092, 5096, 5100, 5104, 5108, 5112, 5116, 5120, 5124, 5128, 5132, 5136, 5140, 5144, 5148, 5152, 5156, 5160, 5164, 5168, 5172, 5176, 5180, 5184, 5188, 5192, 5196, 5200, 5204, 5208, 5212, 5216, 5220, 5224, 5228, 5232, 5236, 5240, 5244, 5248, 5252, 5256, 5260, 5264, 5268, 5272, 5276, 5280, 5284, 5288, 5292, 5296, 5300, 5304, 5308, 5312, 5316, 5320, 5324, 5328, 5332, 5336, 5340, 5344, 5348, 5352, 5356, 5360, 5364, 5368, 5372, 5376, 5380, 5384, 5388, 5392, 5396, 5400, 5404, 5408, 5412, 5416, 5420, 5424, 5428, 5432, 5436, 5440, 5444, 5448, 5452, 5456, 5460, 5464, 5468, 5472, 5476, 5480, 5484, 5488, 5492, 5496, 5500, 5504, 5508, 5512, 5516, 5520, 5524, 5528, 5532, 5536, 5540, 5544, 5548, 5552, 5556, 5560, 5564, 5568, 5572, 5576, 5580, 5584, 5588, 5592, 5596, 5600, 5604, 5608, 5612, 5616, 5620, 5624, 5628, 5632, 5636, 5640, 5644, 5648, 5652, 5656, 5660, 5664, 5668, 5672, 5676, 5680, 5684, 5688, 5692, 5696, 5700, 5704, 5708, 5712, 5716, 5720, 5724, 5728, 5732, 5736, 5740, 5744, 5748, 5752, 5756, 5760, 5764, 5768, 5772, 5776, 5780, 5784, 5788, 5792, 5796, 5800, 5804, 5808, 5812, 5816, 5820, 5824, 5828, 5832, 5836, 5840, 5844, 5848, 5852, 5856, 5860, 5864, 5868, 5872, 5876, 5880, 5884, 5888, 5892, 5896, 5900, 5904, 5908, 5912, 5916, 5920, 5924, 5928, 5932, 5936, 5940, 5944, 5948, 5952, 5956, 5960, 5964, 5968, 5972, 5976, 5980, 5984, 5988, 5992, 5996, 6000, 6004, 6008, 6012, 6016, 6020, 6024, 6028, 6032, 6036, 6040, 6044, 6048, 6052, 6056, 6060, 6064, 6068, 6072, 6076, 6080, 6084, 6088, 6092, 6096, 6100, 6104, 6108, 6112, 6116, 6120, 6124, 6128, 6132, 6136, 6140, 6144, 6148, 6152, 6156, 6160, 6164, 6168, 6172, 6176, 6180, 6184, 6188, 6192, 6196, 6200, 6204, 6208, 6212, 6216, 6220, 6224, 6228, 6232, 6236, 6240, 6244, 6248, 6252, 6256, 6260, 6264, 6268, 6272, 6276, 6280, 6284, 6288, 6292, 6296, 6300, 6304, 6308, 6312, 6316, 6320, 6324, 6328, 6332, 6336, 6340, 6344, 6348, 6352, 6356, 6360, 6364, 6368, 6372, 6376, 6380, 6384, 6388, 6392, 6396, 6400, 6404, 6408, 6412, 6416, 6420, 6424, 6428, 6432, 6436, 6440, 6444, 6448, 6452, 6456, 6460, 6464, 6468, 6472, 6476, 6480, 6484, 6488, 6492, 6496, 6500, 6504, 6508, 6512, 6516, 6520, 6524, 6528, 6532, 6536, 6540, 6544, 6548, 6552, 6556, 6560, 6564, 6568, 6572, 6576, 6580, 6584, 6588, 6592, 6596, 6600, 6604, 6608, 6612, 6616, 6620, 6624, 6628, 6632, 6636, 6640, 6644, 6648, 6652, 6656, 6660, 6664, 6668, 6672, 6676, 6680, 6684, 6688, 6692, 6696, 6700, 6704, 6708, 6712, 6716, 6720, 6724, 6728, 6732, 6736, 6740, 6744, 6748, 6752, 6756, 6760, 6764, 6768, 6772, 6776, 6780, 6784, 6788, 6792, 6796, 6800, 6804, 6808, 6812, 6816, 6820, 6824, 6828, 6832, 6836, 6840, 6844, 6848, 6852, 6856, 6860, 6864, 6868, 6872, 6876, 6880, 6884, 6888, 6892, 6896, 6900, 6904, 6908, 6912, 6916, 6920, 6924, 6928, 6932, 6936, 6940, 6944, 6948, 6952, 6956, 6960, 6964, 6968, 6972, 6976, 6980, 6984, 6988, 6992, 6996, 7000, 7004, 7008, 7012, 7016, 7020, 7024, 7028, 7032, 7036, 7040, 7044, 7048, 7052, 7056, 7060, 7064, 7068, 7072, 7076, 7080, 7084, 7088, 7092, 7096, 7100, 7104, 7108, 7112, 7116, 7120, 7124, 7128, 7132, 7136, 7140, 7144, 7148, 7152, 7156, 7160, 7164, 7168, 7172, 7176, 7180, 7184, 7188, 7192, 7196, 7200, 7204, 7208, 7212, 7216, 7220, 7224, 7228, 7232, 7236, 7240, 7244, 7248, 7252, 7256, 7260, 7264, 7268, 7272, 7276, 7280, 7284, 7288, 7292, 7296, 7300, 7304, 7308, 7312, 7316, 7320, 7324, 7328, 7332, 7336, 7340, 7344, 7348, 7352, 7356, 7360, 7364, 7368, 7372, 7376, 7380, 7384, 7388, 7392, 7396, 7400, 7404, 7408, 7412, 7416, 7420, 7424, 7428, 7432, 7436, 7440, 7444, 7448, 7452, 7456, 7460, 7464, 7468, 7472, 7476, 7480, 7484, 7488, 7492, 7496, 7500, 7504, 7508, 7512, 7516, 7520, 7524, 7528, 7532, 7536, 7540, 7544, 7548, 7552, 7556, 7560, 7564, 7568, 7572, 7576, 7580, 7584, 7588, 7592, 7596, 7600, 7604, 7608, 7612, 7616, 7620, 7624, 7628, 7632, 7636, 7640, 7644, 7648, 7652, 7656, 7660, 7664, 7668, 7672, 7676, 7680, 7684, 7688, 7692, 7696, 7700, 7704, 7708, 7712, 7716, 7720, 7724, 7728, 7732, 7736, 7740, 7744, 7748, 7752, 7756, 7760, 7764, 7768, 7772, 7776, 7780, 7784, 7788, 7792, 7796, 7800, 7804, 7808, 7812, 7816, 7820, 7824, 7828, 7832, 7836, 7840, 7844, 7848, 7852, 7856, 7860, 7864, 7868, 7872, 7876, 7880, 7884, 7888, 7892, 7896, 7900, 7904, 7908, 7912, 7916, 7920, 7924, 7928, 7932, 7936, 7940, 7944, 7948, 7952, 7956, 7960, 7964, 7968, 7972, 7976, 7980, 7984, 7988, 7992, 7996, 8000, 8004, 8008, 8012, 8016, 8020, 8024, 8028, 8032, 8036, 8040, 8044, 8048, 8052, 8056, 8060, 8064, 8068, 8072, 8076, 8080, 8084, 8088, 8092, 8096, 8100, 8104, 8108, 8112, 8116, 8120, 8124, 8128, 8132, 8136, 8140, 8144, 8148, 8152, 8156, 8160, 8164, 8168, 8172, 8176, 8180, 8184, 8188, 8192, 8196, 8200, 8204, 8208, 8212, 8216, 8220, 8224, 8228, 8232, 8236, 8240, 8244, 8248, 8252, 8256, 8260, 8264, 8268, 8272, 8276, 8280, 8284, 8288, 8292, 8296, 8300, 8304, 8308, 8312, 8316, 8320, 8324, 8328, 8332, 8336, 8340, 8344, 8348, 8352, 8356, 8360, 8364, 8368, 8372, 8376, 8380, 8384, 8388, 8392, 8396, 8400, 8404, 8408, 8412, 8416, 8420, 8424, 8428, 8432, 8436, 8440, 8444, 8448, 8452, 8456, 8460, 8464, 8468, 8472, 8476, 8480, 8484, 8488, 8492, 8496, 8500, 8504, 8508, 8512, 8516, 8520, 8524, 8528, 8532, 8536, 8540, 8544, 8548, 8552, 8556, 8560, 8564, 8568, 8572, 8576, 8580, 8584, 8588, 8592, 8596, 8600, 8604, 8608, 8612, 8616, 8620, 8624, 8628, 8632, 8636, 8640, 8644, 8648, 8652, 8656, 8660, 8664, 8668, 8672, 8676, 8680, 8684, 8688, 8692, 8696, 8700, 8704, 8708, 8712, 8716, 8720, 8724, 8728, 8732, 8736, 8740, 8744, 8748, 8752, 8756, 8760, 8764, 8768, 8772, 8776, 8780, 8784, 8788, 8792, 8796, 8800, 8804, 8808, 8812, 8816, 8820, 8824, 8828, 8832, 8836, 8840, 8844, 8848, 8852, 8856, 8860, 8864, 8868, 8872, 8876, 8880, 8884, 8888, 8892, 8896, 8900, 8904, 8908, 8912, 8916, 8920, 8924, 8928, 8932, 8936, 8940, 8944, 8948, 8952, 8956, 8960, 8964, 8968, 8972, 8976, 8980, 8984, 8988, 8992, 8996, 9000, 9004, 9008, 9012, 9016, 9020, 9024, 9028, 9032, 9036, 9040, 9044, 9048, 9052, 9056, 9060, 9064, 9068, 9072, 9076, 9080, 9084, 9088, 9092, 9096, 9100, 9104, 9108, 9112, 9116, 9120, 9124, 9128, 9132, 9136, 9140, 9144, 9148, 9152, 9156, 9160, 9164, 9168, 9172, 9176, 9180, 9184, 9188, 9192, 9196, 9200, 9204, 9208, 9212, 9216, 9220, 9224, 9228, 9232, 9236, 9240, 9244, 9248, 9252, 9256, 9260, 9264, 9268, 9272, 9276, 9280, 9284, 9288, 9292, 9296, 9300, 9304, 9308, 9312, 9316, 9320, 9324, 9328, 9332, 9336, 9340, 9344, 9348, 9352, 9356, 9360, 9364, 9368, 9372, 9376, 9380, 9384, 9388, 9392, 9396, 9400, 9404, 9408, 9412, 9416, 9420, 9424, 9428, 9432, 9436, 9440, 9444, 9448, 9452, 9456, 9460, 9464, 9468, 9472, 9476, 9480, 9484, 9488, 9492, 9496, 9500, 9504, 9508, 9512, 9516, 9520, 9524, 9528, 9532, 9536, 9540, 9544, 9548, 9552, 9556, 9560, 9564, 9568, 9572, 9576, 9580, 9584, 9588, 9592, 9596, 9600, 9604, 9608, 9612, 9616, 9620, 9624, 9628, 9632, 9636, 9640, 9644, 9648, 9652, 9656, 9660, 9664, 9668, 9672, 9676, 9680, 9684, 9688, 9692, 9696, 9700, 9704, 9708, 9712, 9716, 9720, 9724, 9728, 9732, 9736, 9740, 9744, 9748, 9752, 9756, 9760, 9764, 9768, 9772, 9776, 9780, 9784, 9788, 9792, 9796, 9800, 9804, 9808, 9812, 9816, 9820, 9824, 9828, 9832, 9836, 9840, 9844, 9848, 9852, 9856, 9860, 9864, 9868, 9872, 9876, 9880, 9884, 9888, 9892, 9896, 9900, 9904, 9908, 9912, 9916, 9920, 9924, 9928, 9932, 9936, 9940, 9944, 9948, 9952, 9956, 9960, 9964, 9968, 9972, 9976, 9980, 9984, 9988, 9992, 9996, 10000, 10004, 10008, 10012, 10016, 10020, 10024, 10028, 10032, 10036, 10040, 10044, 10048, 10052, 10056, 10060, 10064, 10068, 10072, 10076, 10080, 10084, 10088, 10092, 10096, 10100, 10104, 10108, 10112,

On the second day the King of the Fatigued  
calmly said to them, "I have been here long enough."

<sup>44</sup> H. Roux, "Doux tribus de la région de Pongsaly", pp. 488-89.

Petersburg R Laverenz, 1886, p. 8.

**M. Loewe, *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China During the Han Period*, 202 B.C.-A.D. 230, London B. T. Batsford, 1964, p. 104.**

<sup>24</sup> H. Fritzsche, *On Chronology and the Construction of the Calendar with Special Regard to the Chinese Computation of Time Compared with the European System*, London, 1968, p. 104.

and follows the Tat system according to the calendar used, as well as the date of the new year. The Tat calendar starts at the same date as the Chinese calendar, but in 27 days and 10 hours, so that the two months coincide at a fixed place in the year up to the 10th day of the first month and thereafter. Another feature shared by both years in the Chinese system is the naming of the months after the twelve animals with the animal cycle.

Owing to the typically Tat method of numbering the months it is possible to establish with some certainty when the beginning of the Chinese New Year was. It has been argued above that the August-Tat most probably denotes New Year, as is the case with the November-and early December-Tat respectively. This would imply that the Chinese New Chinese New Year was about 21 January-N February. Moreover, the Szechuanese calendar also follows the Tat system and follows the Chinese in this respect.

A little-known, but thought-provoking piece of information is the fact that the Chinese celebrated their New Year in the January or February date from the Han period. It is only here the Han the Chinese lunar year used the Chinese way of new moon instead of the winter solstice. This pre-Han Chinese New Year agrees perfectly well with the reconstructed An-nit Tat New Year. It may well be interpreted as a sign that the Tat adopted the Chinese lunar calendar before the Han period. Tat documents also state that the Chinese derived their calendar of linear cycles from the Tat. However, this hypothesis must be regarded as very remote because the ancient aspects of the system as known by the Tat still has their set of ten-year and seven-year series, were not developed in the ancient calendar passed after the Chinese had adopted their January-February New Year. It is more likely that the Tat had already adopted the Tat New Year and that they adapted the Chinese calendar to suit their own number of time periods. This may also be seen in connection with the fact that the Tat retained their own method of counting months.

### c) *The Muong and the Vietnamese systems*

The Muong count twelve year-months. The first one bears the name Chien and the twelfth is named Chien with all those between are counted with the regular number. Casteret remarks that the first month begins in he second half of February,<sup>16</sup> but Przyuski has stated that we calculate the beginning of the first month a full month earlier than the Vietnamese. This indicates that at least some of the Muong, at some stage of their history might have been using a kind of leap. This phenomenon can occur as a result of the rather erratic system of intercalation.<sup>17</sup> As soon as a group has a standard of twelve year-months, its regular intercalation is far easier than for example triplets of one or even more months. This phenomenon has also been noted amongst some of the

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Constant, *Les Muong*, p. 504.

<sup>18</sup> J. Przyuski, "Les rites du Dong Tho,

Contribution à l'étude du culte du dieu du soleil au Tonkin", *Dan Viet Nam*, Volume 2, 1948, p. 3.

The Muong and some of the Tai groups at some stretch of their history

The Vietnamese months also carry regular numerals, apart from the

Chinese months which are numbered 1 to 12.

It appears therefore that the name of the first month in Ancient Tai time

was probably the same as the Chinese month of January.

Most of the Vietnamese names of the months are derived from the

Chinese months, but we meet the

two easternmost part of mainland Southeast Asia

intercalary between the months of

January and February. Intercalary months take

the place of the twelfth month. These two months appear

in the Chinese calendar. Vietnamese literature points

out however that they were never used except that the last eleven

months of the year are used. The result is that the Chinese

are clearly at variance with the Chinese and the Tai.

#### D) The Khmer lunar calendar

The Khmer calendar exhibits basically the traits generally found in Mainland Southeast Asia, i.e. a calendar derived from the Chinese calendar with some minor variations, alternating between months of thirty and thirty-one days, and the beginning of the month determined by observation of the moon. The Chinese traits are evident in the Tai, the Muong and the Vietnamese in that they number their months.

The aspect of greatest interest for this study is the fact that the first month corresponds with November-December. This has often been interpreted by Porte-Maspero as an indication of the Tai, the Cambodians and New Year at the end of the year, i.e. December. Moreover it appears to be the case already in the Cambodian calendar described by a Chinese in the historical account given by Chou Ta-Kuan.<sup>1</sup> It would then be the Cambodian New Year at November-December New Year and that this cannot be the case, especially in view of the appropriate stage of the Chinese calendar, requires some comment.

It is quite apparent that a November-December New Year does not fit the general cycle worked out by the Chinese as adopted by the Tai and the Khmer. In those parts where, as among the lowland tribes, the harvest is still completed during the winter season, a period which the farmers restart their sowing of new crops, the rainy season however may be expected in May or June. Keeping a calendar in time with the seasons is a basic skill. And it is not surprising that instead of the Sino-Tibetan calendar have now displaced either the Chinese New Year or the Indian New Year in April. The latter has however the traditional New Year at mid-winter and a name (the Cambodian) of 'Anno novo' December New Year is in keeping with an old saying of the Tai in the northern monsoon which is January-April New Year for a certain group of them.

<sup>1</sup> A. Schneider, *Les institutions annamites agraires des Cambodgiens*, Volume I, pp. 263-40-41  
et basse-Cochinchina, Volume II, p. 263

<sup>2</sup> Porte-Maspero, *Etude sur les riziers*

Three distinct phases of a calendar are proposed to account for the basis of a new calendar family in the Tai culture areas. First, a calendar system based on a year of 12 months, which is the first item of the Tai calendar in Nagaaland and New Year observed in the period 100-200 A.D. The second item is the distribution of the year into 12 months, the system of twelve months. It has been suggested by Mr. M. S. Venkatesan<sup>13</sup> that it may be part of a local system. The third item is the spread of "proto-Muong" names for the Chinese twelve animals in the calendar and several calendar inscriptions that document its spread to Cambodia from a north-eastern centre. These three items can be taken together with the fact that the northeastern monsoon dominates the Arakanese and Thakhein coast and that this is the origin of the traditional Tai calendar from the region being studied. This is also where the cultural and ethnic Arakanese have survived the colonial trace. Few are the indications of any traditional metrical calendar system. Whether or not the calendar can be accepted as more than a local calendar lies upon future research.

### SECTION 3

#### Weeks, days and subdivisions of days

##### a) The Indian system

Thus far no sign of a ten-day or a weekly week has been found in the literature in the Indian subcontinent. The typical form of week is the division of the Indian lunisolar calendar into weeks. There are ten in the day of the moon, twelve in the day of waxing moon, thirteen in the full moon day, then to the eighth day for waning moon and finally the day of new moon. These days were, however, the days of the beginning of the traditional, sacred days of the sun, war and reckoning, and the intervals were sometimes as short as half a month were reckoned. In the Northeast Asian cultures which adopted Buddhism have a quite a similar division of the lunisolar month into four periods because every six days of the first day of the month these same four days also become the days of worship. However since the calendar in Southeast Asia and India is calculated upon solar calendar of progrades from the ones which are the basis of the lunisolar calendar the Buddhist days in Northeast Asia are also roughly one day later. Sources had according to the Indian lunisolar calendar.

Although the interval between the Hindu or Buddhist sacred days was often considered a week of seven days, the seven day week is completely absent from the found records in the literature. The seven day week probably originated in Biblical time. It was used in Israel in the 10th century A.D. and probably earlier.<sup>14</sup> Under Indian influence this week was intro-

Jiced — S. T. — A. T. — S. T. — N. T. — T. — calendar  
did not receive the same attention as the others, and will receive  
no further attention here.

With respect to the S. T. — A. T. — N. T. — T. calendar, we have  
seen that it is particularly important to note the difference between the Tai and the Lao calendar. As mentioned above,  
INTERESTINGLY STUDY OF THE LAOS CALENDAR IN THE  
SYSTEM OF THE TAI CALENDAR IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.  
Evidently, the Tai calendar was derived from the Lao calendar,  
and I also believe that it was derived from the Indian calendar.  
It is difficult to say for certain, but it is clear that the Lao calendar  
is older than the Tai calendar. The Lao calendar is older than either  
the Indian one or the Tai one. It is also clear that the Indian calendar  
Apparently this has been several times reduced until it gave rise to the  
Lao one which contains also the units *winathil* and *baat*.

TABLE 23  
AN INDIAN METHOD OF DIVIDING THE DAY

10 gurus aksharas (long syllables)	= 1 prana (breath,
6 pranas	= 1 vinade
60 vinades	= 1 ghatikas or nadis, or dandas
60 ghatikas	= 1 shoratra

In yet another language dividing the day<sup>1</sup> the term *ramu* is  
encountered, the meaning of a "watch" of three hours duration. This  
may easily be regarded as the result of the Siamese three hour ram, as well  
as the Lao ram, which is also long. All these units of time, from  
*akshara* to *ramu*, therefore, have been derived from possible influences in an  
Ancient Tai system of time-constitution because they appear all to have  
been introduced together with many other aspects of Indian culture, in  
more recent times.

### b) The Burmese system

The common fractional subdivisions of the Burmese day are remarkably  
similar to those of Siam and Laos. The Burmese know "watches" of  
three hours each beginning with a watch from six a.m. to nine a.m. and  
doubtlessly derived it originally as was mentioned in the preceding paragraph.  
There is also a Burmese system of four divisions of the day in which four  
hours are equal to one *ka*. Two *ka*'s are one *ra*, or ten hours are one *pant*,  
six *pant* are one *ba*, or fifteen hours and at the same hour *pant* are one *na*,  
and sixty minutes equal to one day and night. There is little difficulty  
in recognizing that the Burmese *ba* is the same as the Lao *baat* (and  
the Indian *baat*) and the *pant* is the same in effect as the *prame* (and *prava*); that the *na* is not the other than the *na* (and the *na* is the Siamese and Lao *na*), whilst the *ra* is equivalent to a *nari* (or  
*ghatika*). It is quite remarkable that in all the various Indian systems

<sup>1</sup> Barnes, *Vintages*, India, p. 237.  
"Ibid.", p. 238.

Shway Yoe, *The Burmese History and Nations*, p. 351.

of dividing the day it is one and the same list which underlies the lists used by Burmese, Siamese and Laotian astronomers and astrologers. A specialist on Indian systems of computation of time might be able to identify the exact text which must have formed the basis of this particular development.

Apart from the divisions of the day which are suitable to the ritual specialist in his calculation of exact auspicious moments, there is also a traditional way daily subdivision based upon factors such as general positions of sun and moon and regularly recurring daily activities of farmers and their domestic animals.<sup>44</sup> Some of these moments of time are enumerated in Table 24. Unfortunately Saway Yoe provides only a segment of the complete list, halting at one time in the morning with the frustrating word "etcetera". Moreover, amongst the few expressions listed, several of the time-markers, in particular those referring to Buddhist monks, represent aspects of time-computation which came with the advent of Buddhism and which can therefore have no bearing on customs relating to the Ancient Tai culture. The remaining few entries show more attention paid to the height of the sun above the horizon than was encountered in any of the lists of Tai divisions of the day. The Tai occasionally refer to the shadow's length in diurnal time-reckoning.

TABLE 24  
BURMESE TRADITIONAL DIVISIONS OF THE DAY - SOME EXAMPLES

Description	Approximate Time
The earliest cock-crowing time	
Before the sky is light-time	
When the light gets strength	5.30 a.m.
When monks go on alms-round	6 a.m. 7 a.m.
When monks return from alms	8 a.m.
Breakfast time	8 a.m.
When sun is a span over horizon	
When sun is high as a toddybaum	
Etc.	

### c) The Akha, Khmu, P'u Nai, Hmong and Lanten weeks

In the ethnographic literature on Southeast Asia in many groups there is an occasional reference to a week. The Akha are reported to use a twelve-day week<sup>45</sup> and since they designate each day with an animal from the Chinese zodiac that series there can be little doubt that this week is formed directly or indirectly as a result of the Chinese calendrical system. The same twelve-day week has been encountered amongst the Tai Dus and also amongst the Hmong and the P'u Nai. The latter call their twelve-day cycle a *n-n*.<sup>46</sup> The account for the Khmu, in which it was reported that they possess a sixteen-day week, has been dealt with in some detail in the first section of this chapter. It has been shown that the account is not wholly reliable and that the Khmu probably use the full sexagesimal day cycle.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 553-54.

<sup>45</sup> Routh, "Deux tribus de la region de

<sup>46</sup> Bernatzik, *Akhs und Miao*, Volume 2, Pongsaly, p. 431.

In these cases the sun's apparent motion can be said to possess a ten-day cycle.

In a similar fashion as in Europe we can be  
read as consecutive days of the week. These are to be  
found in the standard calendar in the Land. They are never  
occur more than once in that sequence and they do not consist of a regular  
or not a day's duration. Considering that it is best to start festival in days  
beginning with Kau or with Pak. A perusal of Table IV establishes that  
the Land Kau is the first of the decimal series, whilst a Pak day is  
the fifth. It would seem the Land derive their use of the sixty day cycle  
apparently from the La people can be used in this case as corroborating evi-  
dence for the existence of a La five day week. It is unlikely that the Land  
have taken this aspect directly from the Laotians, for the latter used to  
consider the third and eighth day of the decimal series as festive ones.

#### d) The Chinese week and subdivisions of the day

There is another suggestion that from very early times, long before the Han period, when in the main features of the sixty day and sixty-year cycles were fixed, there was an early week. This week was called *huai* and lasted ten days. It seems that this ten-day cycle served as a subdivision of the lunar month. This feature has been encountered also at present day Hong Kong and in the country see Table 201 and in the descriptions of Mong and Vietnamese months. It appears quite possible that in ancient China. In the early Chinese system of time reckoning the *hsien* cycle had an important religious significance. Specific days of the *hsien* week were reserved by the ruler for worship of particular ancestors.<sup>44</sup> This *hsien* week gradually lost its importance. There is no evidence which would warrant the assumption that the *hsien* week was ever subdivided into two equal parts. It may therefore be assumed that the reconstructed Tai five-day week like the Nine-night-Dreeth New Year and the method of counting months, represents a feature of Ancient Tai culture which is not derived from Chinese methods of computation of time.

From very early as the Chinese have been using a new day at the moment is an instant counting twelve periods until reaching a new day the following morning so that each period is equal to two international hours. As can be expected the twelve periods were given the names of the twelve earthly branches. There were also smaller divisions of the day. In the early Han period in the first or second century B.C. a method was already in use of dividing up the sun dial and whereby the day and night was cut up into one hundred segments each one equivalent to just over four minutes of modern time. In addition to these accurate ways of time reckoning which probably were mostly used by astronomers,

• 12 km. E. from Id. Falls in the Cache Valley, pH 4-5  
A small lake, 100' above the river bed.

*Cradle of the East*, pp. 236-44.

people used a series of descriptive terms such as "cock crew", "sun", "gimlet-hour" and sunset. The standard system and popular expositions were combined and moments of the day could be described by expressions such as "Jinner hour and three quarters", "the afternoon after sunset" or "sunset and four seconds". The latter in our terms would be "one hour after sunset".<sup>54</sup>

Apart from a few superficially similaries which probably go back to virtually ubiquitous features of time-keeping in the evidence from early China shows that there are no close correspondences between what could be established as African features and early Chinese at least with regard to the diurnal divisions. There is no sign that the Tai have ever used the Chinese unit of a hundredth of a day. The only correspondence in the literature are the fact that the Dorians, the Black Tai may divide their day into twelve parts. In the case of the Dyo, this may be ascribed to a general Sino-influence and the fact of the Black Tai system shows that the Black Tai system does not closely correspond with that of the Chinese.

e) *The Muong and Vietnamese diurnal divisions and weeks*

The case, described for the city of In-tai has also been made for the Muong,<sup>51</sup> twelve parts of the Black Tai way

As described in the previous section, the numbers of both the Maiping and the Vietnamese divide a month up into four quarters. It is a incomplete month, and into two decimal sets. In one period of nine days it contains an "Incomplete one". Each set of ten or nine days is indicated by a generic term, and the position (1 to 9) in the series is indicated simply by a numerical

### f) The Khmer week

In the literature on Cambodia the seven-day week is dominant. It was already firmly established in the twelfth century.<sup>62</sup> There has been no trace thus far of a ten-day week. However there is a picture of a 1 x 25 square diagram which has only been used in Cambodia. This diagram, described in Chapter 6 for the Black Tai and the Tai Luan and in a variant form for the Siamese, has been used as corroborating evidence for the existence of an ancient Tai ten-day week. If that reconstruction of the five-day week and the link with the diagram was correct, it is suggested that this type of horoscope spread from the Tai peoples to the Cambodians.

<sup>10</sup> Loewe, *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*, p. 103.

<sup>13</sup> Gauthier, *Les Malins*, p. 595.

**P**elliot (translator and editor),  
*Mémoires sur les coutumes du Cambodge par  
Tcheou To-Kouan. Extraits du Bas état de*

L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Hanoi,  
F. H. Schneider, (1902)

<sup>14</sup> P. Billard, "A propos d'une carte horoscopique lactante", p. 381, He mentionne varius Khmer manuscripts.

In the same way, the Chinese calendar has been adopted by many other peoples in Southeast Asia, and it is probable that the Tai calendar was influenced by the Chinese calendar. The Chinese calendar was first adopted by the Lao in the 13th century AD, and by the Siamese in the 15th century AD. It is not known exactly when the Tai adopted the calendar, but it is likely that they did so in the 15th century AD. The Chinese calendar has been influenced by the Indian calendar, which has been adopted by many other peoples in Southeast Asia.

### 3. Tai calendar

The calendar from the bronze framework is the origin of the Tai calendar. The solving of this problem may well throw further light upon the Archaic period of Tai history.

With regard to the Tai method of counting months, again a system can be seen in its features. It has been able to single out a few features which are unique, probably Southeast Asian. This concerns the calendar of the Tai New Year and the method of numbering Lunar months. It has been possible to develop a case for the origin of a set of Southeast Asian features in Annam, Lai, Vietnamese Muong and Khmer calendars, namely the coastal region of Annam and Tonkin, where a northern monsoon dominates the agricultural cycle. It is possible though, that other parts of Southeast Asia with a northern monsoon may have to be considered before this hypothesis can be developed further.

Regarding the reconstructed Ancient Tai five-day week, only a single fragment of information was found, namely that the Lamer possess a calendar which may be back to such a five-day week. This evidence is very weak, as it is not too consistent with the idea that the five day week was originated in China. None of the other civilizations of mainland Southeast Asia possess such a week and it is suggested that the feature may well be "typically Tai".

## CONCLUSIONS

In this book the technique developed to study aspects of Ancient Tai culture has been applied in two distinct fields of enquiry: blood sacrifices and the compilation of time. In each case first the evidence collected personally from the Khamvong, the Phakey, the Khantu and the Ahom peoples has been presented in some detail, thus filling a considerable gap in the ethnographic literature on Tai peoples. In each case this was followed by the results of a search through the literature on the whole range of Tai peoples for information on the same aspect of culture. This material then was summarised and an assessment was made as to which aspects qualified for inclusion in the Ancient Tai culture. Guided by these findings, literature on peoples surrounding the Tai was searched for signs of whether or not patterns similar to those ascribed the Ancient Tai label could be found.

This wider search often proved helpful in unclothing a variety of legends and stories apparently indicating borrowing on the part of a Tai people at a fairly early stage of the development of Tai culture, and thus reflecting a great oasis of cultural contact.

The research has been shown to be a bear-site research. The two topics concentrate mainly that both topics have been studied in detail by scholars. It is difficult to say as to make it possible to single out the most traditional aspects which different Tai groups have in common. Even more important is the observation that in both the data on sacrifices and in those on calendar computation the Tai data, taken as a whole are markedly different from those of surrounding peoples. The Tai set of data are easily discerned: they are similar, compatible and apparently related. The surrounding peoples are heterogeneous and their data have served mainly to indicate a wide variety there exists in the cultural traditions of the region. This observation is particularly valid for the study of sacrificial traditions.

The emergence of a military manner of making a Tai communal sacrifice may be seen as a contrast to one of the basic assumptions underlying this whole exercise namely that there exists such a phenomenon as an Ancient Tai culture. In this case, a relatively homogeneous tradition which existed at the end of the first millennium A.D. and which rapidly dispersed over mainland Southeast Asia may be said to diverge into separate cultures.

It may be pointed out here that the existence of Tai pattern is not the result of careful editing and selecting, nor those cuttings of ethnographic reports which fit in with a preconceived 'Old Tai' culture. Great care has been taken by present scholars and not to lose the separate roads that many Tai groups have trodden since their separation. In this respect this study differs from many other comparative ethnology works where researchers in their enthusiasm present only the data which support their theory.

An effort has been made to avoid where possible overlapping cultural traditions. This is the scope of the first section. The presentation of data on the Tai cultures has deliberately been limited to the Tai and their immediate neighbours. I might add that such limitation has advantages as well as disadvantages and it can renew further perspectives. At present the most valuable area for research lies in the comparison of the various subcultures. The analysis of linguistic data from the Paitchus and from Burma may be expected to elicit a massive amount of work that is yet to be done but which will probably be likely to produce many new results. Until now I have concentrated but a few links between tribal areas and the regions. For example the cobra snake cult appears to cover Southeast Asia. With respect to the material presented in this book, only a single instance of striking but scattered similarity between mainland Southeast Asia and India has been considered. This concerns a legend regarding an ancient tree referred to as *Amra* which shows a number of features in common with the legends discussed above in Chapter 6. This is neither an intrusive piece of narration but not necessarily one upon which the story can be built. In the first place the Burmese dialect is not completely clear. Second, and more important signs of contact between the plain of Chittagong and those of eastern Southeast Asia have been observed and assessment is based on the assumption that such contacts must have taken place before the time of the first recorded contact. Third, at present no historical records of such contacts between Burmese people and those of eastern Southeast Asia which have taken place has not been satisfactorily explored.

It is in the latter section that the author's main interest lies. In many other works on prehistoric Thailand, as well as in the archaeological history of Thailand, the period of the early state of Sukhothai has been taken to be the earliest. As far as the author and I know these periods have been established in a rather arbitrary way. The outline of the earliest Tai culture, as reflected in the figures, has rather a rather late character. Post-Pitayut, or even during the Haradhyaka (Chao) period, it would seem to me to be better to start in the second century B.C. in order to compare it with the culture of the Senges and Kols. The present state of early Thailand is unknown. A possible but unverified investigation is to verify the connection of Tai culture in Laos and Lanna with that of the Tai culture with that of the Dong Son. Some speculations along this line were published elsewhere.\*

In my last lecture I think it is already beyond question that the four Tai groups represented on our map of Assam represent a more general Tai pattern and should not be separated. The same observation may be made with respect to the four groups of Khamvong Phakor, Kedah and Assam. It seems to me that the separation of time has very well served the other Tai groups. Moreover these data have been previously used in "Kunming, A City of Legend" but may be because they may be as old as 1100 years, they have not been cited.

\* M. Courant, "Essay d'ethnologie comparée", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extreme-orient*, Volume XXXVI, 1936,

Plate XXXVIII opposite p. 268.

"Terwiel, "The Origin of the Tai Peoples Reconsidered", pp. 252-54.

tively, at the Tainan Museum, Taiwan, and in Thailand. A detailed account of these collections is given in the following section. Be it further noted that the author has possible Ancient Tai aspects of culture.

In order to make up a summary of the evidence presented by the various sources mentioned above, it may be well to present a number of conclusions which may be drawn from the material presented so far. In the first place, there is no doubt that the ancient Tai society was a patriarchal one, and that the family unit was the basic element of social organization. In the second place, there was a definite estate system in the society, which has been suggested as possibly having had part of the Ancient Tai culture. Secondly, there is a very remarkable similarity between Tai culture and that of surrounding groups.

### Aspects of Ancient Tai culture

In Volume I of *The Tai of South-east Asia* certain features of Ancient Tai culture have been discussed. These characteristics of birth, marriage and death were also described. Aspects of Ancient Tai culture, the likely Ancient Tai calendar, and the determination that most probably Tai society before 1949 must have been divided up into strictly exogamous patrilineal clans formed some of the rather unexpected results of that study. More recently, it was learnt that the Ancient Tai must have had particular cranial deformation techniques, together with specific traditions. These seem to be associated with the Tai language. It will be noted that a remarkable feature of the Ancient Tai culture was that it may have been part of the same Tai culture. After the extracts contained in this volume, it is possible to add a considerable amount of new material.

It may be assumed as most probable that, at regular intervals, the Ancient Tai gathered together in their villages, or in the open fields, to mark the passage of time in accordance with the cycles of the sun and of some name. At present, it is believed that such a gathering took place some time between Mid-January and Mid-February. Linked with the fact that by then the sun was in the sign of Aries, an essential feature of the agricultural calendar was the offering of two guardian spirits to follow the sun until it came to a standstill in the year's journey in the sign of Taurus. This, and the growing season, upon which Tai society depends, will be fruitful.

It has been found, however, that a few groups celebrate a second, prominent calendar since about October to November. Various theories exist concerning this, but it is felt that the second festival may be connected with the return of the rainy season and to make up for the shortness of the rainy season late in the year. The second rainless period follows immediately after a fruitful harvest. In this case, however, no specific calendar is adhered to. In the northern parts, the belief has been expressed that the Ancient Tai used to celebrate New Year in November-December, and it has been

defined that it is very well have been related to a northern rite used down  
to the end of the cycle. In the next of this cycle it seems that he  
commemorated sacrifice to the gods which took place some time between  
September and November to celebrate the imminent growing season.  
The tow days were fast days when people paid a second sacrifice, and thus he a  
remnant of past practices which has been abandoned by many Tai groups  
in order to adjust to a different agricultural calendar when they spread over  
mainland Southeast Asia.

There can be no doubt as to the fact that the Ancient Tai performed a  
general rest during the days upon which the communal sacrifice took place.  
The community then rarely separated itself from the rest of the world.  
No house or cave in their forest villages and no visitors were allowed  
to enter whilst the festival was being held. No work in the fields was  
permitted. Roads of the hill tribe community were blocked to ensure that  
nobody would intrude.

The Ancient Tai communal sacrifice was carried out at a site remote  
from the normal human habitation. There is a strong possibility that as far back as  
some way back in the vicinity of a large tree, the tree connected with the  
goddess deity of the community. The sacrifice was a very rough  
wooden structure consisting of a platform made of stones or stones  
from the ground by a set of stakes. The stones were provided with a thatch  
roof — it was a permanent structure but if each year a new one was built  
a roof might be omitted.

The sacrifice consisted at least the carcass of either at least one large  
domestic animal usually a buffalo. Such an offering should be a healthy  
strong and a fat animal of the same gender. Apart from the buffalo,  
other goats or the cattle must also been presented and in the case of a rather  
larger one, one or two others. It is worth having a good selection of other  
domestic animals such as cocks and hens as presents to other powers  
which were made contact with the guardian spirits. At all sacrifices,  
big or small rice sweets and alcohol beer or rice wine have been included.

It has not been possible to reconstruct in detail what was used  
to kill the animal, a considerable variety of weapons have been con-  
cerned. The commonest method seems to be that the buffalo had a heavy vessel  
cut in its neck. It was important that the victim was not hampered by a  
show of blood. This animal was volatile and apparently presented to the  
gods. The animal was always taken mace in the vicinity of the altar.

In the larger meetings where the ritual was to be exercised to have taken an  
elaborate form all offerings to the Tai pantheon were worshipped, but  
in the smaller ones there were only three to be done. They of the ritual  
were carried out by the Dr. Muan, a guardian spirit. The offering alone  
may have been unnecessary. It may either possess its own wicca or reflect  
any power of the Ancient Tai who lived less than 100 years ago. Muan  
The material brought forward suggests however that the several classes of  
unseen powers which act as local deities in their area of control may  
go back to a shared culture. Thus there were a set of great celestial gods,  
possibly known by the general term that of a lung. In previous of this  
time there were gods of natural forces given that is to say among the fan or  
lava especially those periods of marriage when man meets with the earth  
and masters inhabiting the surrounding mountains. It would be fascinating

to data. The last three rows of the table show the results of the experiments. The first two rows show the results of the experiments on the one hand, and the last two rows show the results of the experiments on the other hand. The first two rows show the results of the experiments on the one hand, and the last two rows show the results of the experiments on the other hand.

On this occasion I went to see an Ancient Tao ceremony which derives from the book of the Confucian rite of spirit possession. In Ancient Taoism there can always be no secret. It was believed that the unseen powers, attacked by a sword, the sunbeams as by the wind, the flowers, candles, incense by the odour, alcohol by beverages and the touch of animal blood and wood by certain ritual paraphernalia, can be persuaded to be present at the ceremonies or sometimes even to proceed over the most important stages of the ritual. From the days of the Ancient Tao religion there have been but a few priests left and a few who have shown them selves as able and fleet bodies for this purpose. At the appropriate moment after just half an hour the rites take place after all the preparations have been made the priest medium becomes a real medium. With power descended to attack the ceremony never comes as a surprise. On occasions where many spirits come down they follow a prepared order and the spirit medium's helpers have sets of costumes and objects of the various gods at hand and dress up the medium accordingly.

The king said that he desired to know what secret had been in the Ancestors of Pao-Ming, and as far as it could be evident with those who had been his ancestors, he said that the secret had been at the same place. I say also, I believe, that if you were there than in the present time, you also would have found out that was an appropriate place for this formal contact between humanity and the godly powers. The physical appearance of the king caused him to be subject to the insistence that the ceremony be repeated, and that the roads are blocked off so that no one may have an audience with the god's wife—avoids all circumstances which could hinder the god's coming.

The importance of the ~~de~~ sees never absent is further underlined by the fact that there are three real parent shrines which appear to be there solely of the purpose of starting this legend. The most important of these is a hill place which a couple of miles from the sacrament hills are attached. This place is not simply a shrine, it is between heaven and earth; it may be even used as a tool to help the soul to the particular section of earth. The last is to test and attract the power of the gods and where the medium away from the other shrines. A number of legends are related to this feature of the shrines, but the principal one is that it is the sole reason for letting the gods descend to earth at the initiation of the priest. It is a real place of which the centre is a stone altar and the stone suggests an Ancient Tower in which the priest resided. The stone is now within the hill and near the sacred shrines of the town. The others are older. Very old and modern versions I will not dare to give, but I will say that the *Sanci* making

The link between yearly ceremonial sacrifice and mediation is likely to have been a close one. It is sometimes reinforced by implements such as pillars and posts. It is often also explained through an itinerant priest who goes from village to village and is invoked at the gates of each town or village. In rural areas and in towns, however, it is also possible that the priest of the Ancient Tai must have done, can gather once a year to speak to one or more of their gods. It may be suggested that Anou, the chief of other chief gods, is the most important deity here. Ancient Tai probably also believed that other gods were also called Anou. If this was so, then we can get some idea of the deity being worshipped. Some of these details provide some insight in the principles of Ancient Tai religion.

The reconstruction of Ancient Tai ritual posts and their likely use of them seems to be based on the evidence of ceremony and the role of other deities. These customs may be as follows. In this respect the analysis of present day Sino-Tibetan folk customs may be helpful. This has been done by Dr. S. K. Chakravarti. Under the fact that a ritual post is used in many cases in all kinds of customs, namely, in wedding, birth, death, etc., he has drawn a number of conclusions. The first conclusion is that the post always stands on the left side of the entrance gate. This clearly indicates that it is a post which stands on the left side of the entrance gate. The second conclusion is that the post is set up in the centre of the room where the ceremony is held. During the ritual a canopy is usually set up in the house and sometimes it is attached to the pole. From this it is clear that the post can be the most probable that it is a ritual post but it is also very likely that it is a post of communication. This is also supported by the belief of a spirit medium. May I remind you that in modern Khmer architecture appears to be used as a symbol of a ladder or a staircase. In a宇宙圖 (Cosmogram) of the present day, it is shown how the universe consists of a ladder or a staircase which leads upwards to the world of the dead.

With the recently recurring veneration of trees formed the most important ceremony which were carried on in the part of this book various other sacrifices and times related to sacrifices have been raised. Thus it has been established that it is likely that the Ancient Tai, in times

\* For illustrations, see T. Silcock (translator), *A Village Ordination*, Scutumavani Institute of Asian Studies Monograph, No. 25, London, Curzon Press, 1976, p. 94 ff.

of en b	of en c	of en d	of en e	of en f
prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited
sacrifice	sacrifice	sacrifice	sacrifice	sacrifice
group	group	group	group	group

but, none of these qualify for inclusion in the Ancient Tai tradition.

But the ancient Tai custom of sacrifice was established in the 19th century. In general, it is a modern custom, the frequency of sacrifice. When it is shown that once a year most Ancient Tai groups still practice human sacrifice, the Mien must be taken as the earliest of all forms of sacrifice. The earliest known Ancient Tai custom of sacrifice is the *Mei*. Many different animals were used, such as deer, pigs, dogs, etc. The meat was specially prepared. It was eaten by the people who were killed, offered to the ancestors, and then consumed. The elaborate ceremony was carried out in a simple hut. The meat was to be consumed by the tribe members. As a result there was hardly any ceremony. This may have been a simple ritual sacrifice. It is even possible that every year there would have been a reasonable reason for it to be carried out. The proper way of doing it has been recorded for some peoples in mainland Southeast Asia. But the only occasion when people had to bring their friends was after they had been killed for a religious sacrifice. The Tai peoples may now have filled in with other peoples.

The literature on the main meaning of the ancient sacrifice tends to overlook its possible interpretation as sacrifice as well as the alternative. The latter may be infinitely linked with the fact that the killing of cattle was a highly sacred and very ceremonially defined event. Such a rite is called *Yan-hu-nang* (yearly) whose daily rituals and offerings are clearly informed about the readers in the *Shi Yen* (AS 1973: 103-104). This study is based upon the *Yan-hu-nang* of the *Tai* and can be brought from the earliest representations of the *Yan-hu-nang* of the *Shi Yen* as a well-known cycle of annual sacrifices which should be observed as the **honor of the Numinous** (AS 1973: 103-104). The sacrifices do not mean that the *Yan-hu-nang* is a *ritual* in the problem of killing the cattle. For example, a well-known *Yan-hu-nang* of the *Shi Yen* series of sacrifices will be observed in the *Shi Yen* (AS 1973: 103). Another view of the problem of the *Yan-hu-nang* is that sacrifice was regarded as a custom for the *Yan-hu-nang* in a more fashion. For example, before killing the cattle, it should be purified and that this rite refers to the *Yan-hu-nang* of the *Shi Yen*. These *Yan-hu-nang* customs have been observed and recorded the progenitors of the present society. Some of the *Yan-hu-nang* sacrificial events in the *Yan-hu-nang* of the *Shi Yen* are performed in an unusual factory and unusual manner. For example, the *Yan-hu-nang* communal sacrifices of Phu Makay and the *Yan-hu-nang* taken

\* Lafont, *Taiot Djawat*, p. 219.

the life of the buffalo which is often on the altar, the animal's dissection, preparation, cooked and eaten by all the participants. It represents one of the rare occasions when all can sacrifice themselves in public domain. The consideration that the killing of most animals is a sacred act and that the ritual is supposed to be a propitiatory offering to the gods of the land needs to be part of any study of the culture of Tai peoples. The sacrificed animals may be the best part of Assamese traditional religious rituals. It is believed that the ritual can be easily placed under an aspect usually neglected. Especially it is in connection with the sacrifices.

There are several more items to be mentioned in the overview and summary of the material culture. A brief summary of them follows. One of the interesting features of the Tai calendar is that the Tai shared a few of the major calendar types described. These most likely to have been part of the Ancient Tai culture were the study of the sacrificed animals after the sacrifice, the division of their parts which will indicate whether or not they are fit for eating. Another common practice was the examination of the body of the animal by the royal specialist. A further recognized consequence of the practice of hunting was the slivers in the skin holes which were used to test the bones. They also had formed part of the stated ritual of propitiating the gods. The latter observation is not altogether surprising. No doubt there has been reservation for a time in the past when may be some semi-tropical peoples who have been scattered in each other's territories — the Tai migrations over mainland Southeast Asia.

A striking custom entered for softening when a large number of Tai peoples to warrant it. An example seems to be the custom of wearing in cloth whilst drinking the blood of a sacrificed animal.

This is no part of the book was devoted to issues of time reckoning. It was established beyond any doubt that the Ancient Tai had a sixty year cycle made up of twelve cycles of five years taken from a series of ten and a series of twelve names. The same names in the same combinations were used to denote a sixty day cycle. Apart from these several series it is clear that the Ancient Tai counted their months by calling the first month by a particular name but most of the other ones were given an ordinary Tai numerical. The even numbered months were given thirty days, odd months twenty-nine. Each lunar month was divided into a waxing half, which always contained fifteen days, and a waning half which lasted thirteen days if the month had an even number in its name, or fifteen if it was odd. Every three years or every sixty year cycle there was a leap month added in order to prevent the calendar to become too far out of step with the visible phases of the moon. The leap months were introduced in the solar year by taking from the last month of the year. The adding of this extra month occurred always at the same place of the solar year, around July. The system of intercalary months was followed seven years and was repeated every nineteen years. It is likely that the Ancient Tai lunar year began on November December at first new moon. There is great interest regarding the question of the origin of the Tai calendar for it involves an agricultural system based upon a northern monsoon.

One of the most surprising results of the study of Tai time reckoning system has been the emergence of the ritual rice fly week as a likely part of the Ancient Tai calendar. The rice insect week of the rice fly week is a

striking example of this is the *Chen-tzu* (the *Chen* or *Tai* of the *Akha*) which was a common name of the *Chen-tzu* only when it was examined in connection with reports from Laos.

It has also been suggested that the day began at sunrise. This may be considered to be of little value, however, as the Tai culture does not appear to have had any calendar, so that it is not certain whether they had any way of reckoning time. It is, nevertheless, possible to draw some conclusions from the terms expressed in the *Chen-tzu* which give the time of sunrise expressed in the days in progress. These expressions include a lot of unsurprising material, such as "cock's crow", and "breakfast time". An examination of these shows that while the calendar of the Ancient Tai state with many subdivisions of hours cannot be reconstructed, the expressions of time are very close to those in the *Chen-tzu*. It has been demonstrated that the Ancient Tai used terms for "dawn", "the whole morning", "noon", "afternoon", "dusk", "evening", "night" and "midnight", and from these it was possible to give an indication of what the terms must have sounded like.

### Tai culture in its wider setting

Many aspects of the Ancient Tai spiritual tradition have not been encountered in the ethnographic literature of the surrounding peoples. Most regularly occurring cultic animal sacrifices are extremely widespread, the ritual texts of the *Chen-tzu* provide described, there are not. These actions include a portentous sacrificial rite such as the insistence on carrying out the ritual just outside the inhabited area, the nearness of a large tree or sacred grove, the use of a raised altar made of plain material, the killing of the animal near this altar, and the custom of flaying and pouring the blood to the ground. Very few peoples share this rite with the Tai. Of those mentioned, apart a significant number of these factors, the P'uh Nai and the Dala are probably the best known by the non-sacrifice Jivaro, who have probably not been fully influenced by Tai culture. Only the Khmu and P'uh Nai seem as yet to appear to have considerably affinity in their sacrificial customs with those of the Ancient Tai. This cohesive point to link with early Southeast Asia rather than one with China for this aspect of culture.

The *Chen-tzu* sacrifice itself, however, shows a completely different picture especially the ritual killing of a domestic animal need not be preserved from the family or other forms of divine danger. The Tai have this particular ritual in common with the Akha, with the Keng and with the Lahu. The reason for this is not immediately clear. The sacrifice may probably must be taken in early history. It has been reported in early China for a time which is the Akha has been assigned to the Tai, though it is therefore likely that this ritual was passed on to the Ancient Tai, until the other groups mentioned above, i.e. Chinese. This information is not, however,

thus with the old Tai areas now known as West of the hills since appears to be about 500-600 A.D. and it is the last part of the Tai became part of the Lao state and so with the Tai became immediately involved with the Lao state. It was about 1000 A.D.

The Tai of course had their own customs and their background influenced the Tai in the Lao states. It has been demonstrated that the Tai were a people who sacrifice from Neolithic times. As far as the Tai states in North of Yunnan and the Tai Lao area is concerned there is a similar ritual behaviour in both areas. It is relatively recent because in fact with the Khamer and the Burmese. In fact we can see that these ceremonies must be regarded as a prehistoric ritual of power which was reserved for only very special days. The animals used were the bull and the cow. The bull was the animal used for sacrifice have presence by itself. It is a common custom in the west Tai tradition. This tradition is also found in the south as the northern Tai and the southern Tai. There is also evidence of the practice of searching for a victim or sacrifice. It seems to come from the cultural contact between the Tai and the Chinese. It seems to come from the northern Chinese who have been reported without regard for the particular ritual or ceremony. It is a different story between the northern and the southern Tai. In the south the sacrifice was confined to a single animal which was killed at the time of sacrifice was practised by many tribes. It is a custom from China to India, and from Cambodia to Assam. The sacrifice depicted here has demonstrated that quite separate from the northern Tai and the type of victim which is depicted is something else again. A single criterion for cultural contact. The sacrifice has been the killing of a victim or group. The cow sacrifice has been found in the earliest times of other groups. However the restricted nature of the Tai and the fact that there were found only amongst some of the surrounding cultures.

An interesting feature which has entered in the very end of the literature is the distribution of the Tai symbol. The symbol is found in a specifically adequate region covering most of northern Vietnam, Laos, northern Burma and Thailand and therefore in the Tai. It is seen amongst many different tribal groups. It is a very beautiful traditional Tai symbol. It has been argued that it is in the Tai groups. It is extremely connected with its being used as a stamp on the types of pieces. From the fact that this Tai motif has been found in almost any of the western and the groups it was argued that the Tai peoples adopted it shortly after they had been on their invasion westwards into Southeast Asia. There cannot be made a case for this argument in an ancient Tai culture until the symbol is demonstrated to exist in the western groups.

The symbol which is a stamp on a piece of paper has revealed a extremely complex pattern. Thus the technique used is where slivers are pressed into a bowl which is made from bamboo strips apparently derived from ancient China and in the course of time it was carried by the Tai peoples living in a belt with a sliver stamp. The last of the Tai went westwards to Assam. The custom of the stamp was however taken over and can be traced for thousands of years and as the development of the Tai has been suggested in this study that the stamp of cutting a piece of bamboo strip in the tree

may be related to the Tais. This is true of the Tais in the Lanna, Tai Lue, and Muang groups. In China, however, the Tai Lue and Muang groups are called the Chinese Tai, and each appears to have a separate history of diffusion.

Apart from the well-known cases of Tai groups which have been in contact for centuries, there are many others which are not so well known. Thus the examination of the Tai who were concentrated in a particular part of North Vietnam. These people speaking an old Tai language have now become assimilated with the upper Annam. The result being that the language has been lost and only in eastern Annam and not in North Vietnam. The study of distribution techniques has, however, revealed a subject which it studies in much more detail than has been possible in the past, and may prove rewarding and relevant in many other aspects. The early history of a region has been shown to start very certainly from spread easily from one group to another, a list of practices common part of a cultural heritage of a single group.

It has been shown also on this page that the sharing of a particular divination system like the Chinese calendar or Hindu symbol such as the swastika is not necessarily an indication of some cultural contact between the two groups, but rather a process of intimate fusion of cultures. In order to establish a case for the latter, a large number of cases must be brought together with the same care as in the study of language, culture, and customs, probably a much longer time will be required to complete such contact.

Systematic research on the calendar in a general category of cultural systems has not been done, but the Tai type of calendar seems to form an important hypothesis that will be considerably corroborated by further research. The calendar of particular regions and periods is also of interest, and movements within the calendar in a given area can also show the influence the surrounding systems. Its considerable advancement will be.

It has been proven that the calendar system of the Ancient Tai derived from China. The calendar which are listed in the Tai version had gradually developed in its own way and had reached the stage of a four-fold year and sixty-year during the Han period. Some of the features of the calendar which was part of this system as used by the Ancient Tai indicate that they adopted it before the ninth century A.D. It is not the subject of this paper if ten names diverges mark. It is, however, that it is considered that the relationship between the Tai calendar and Chinese calendar remains a mystery. Its solution is a major problem regarding the phase of its history which in this volume has been labelled "the Archaic period".

Aspects of the calendar in the Tai areas have been considered in many ethnographic studies of the Tai. However, apart from those groups who have adopted it wholly from the Tai, they show a great variation in their treatment of the system. Many groups use indigenous words

to indicate the series of twelve animals others have half-absorbed the sixty-day cycle into their Tai calendar. While there is no evidence regarding the Tai calendar and sixty-day cycles, it is interesting how all the Tai versions, apart from the Nagaese one which was introduced at a later date, do not rate a true twelve-animal. This is in itself what would lead them all to derive from a common source which has been preserved in Ancient Tai texts. It is even furthereterminate the validity of the assumption that, as before the dispersion there was such a thing as a quite homogeneous Ancient Tai culture.

It has been established that many aspects of the Ancient Tai lunar calendar also derive from China. The Chinese developed the system of twelve earth months alternating with long and short ones; they added a day to a long month, the phases of the moon therefore covered the entire solar-lunar cycle and developed this system of intercalary months. All these features the Tai adopted, but it has been shown that most other peoples of mainland Southeast Asia share this type of calendar. From Burma to Vietnam, the early calendar system with twelve months is primarily derived from China – distinctions as yet to be made. The Tai, it is usually assumed, had no such calendar. Southeast Asian peoples with a civilization which has faced the major environmental problems related to the erratic precipitation of time was with them at the very beginning of our era. Whilst this may be true for the Chinese and some of the peoples living in the Southeast Asian archipelago, it is not true for the mainland in general. From the survey of various aspects of customs of mainland Southeast Asian peoples it is clear that the beliefs of the Chinese advised in agriculture can be observed as far south as they before there was a sign of "Inhabitation".

The Ancient Tai lunar calendar goes beyond these respects from that of the Chinese, namely in that the months are given names in the local vernacular instead of using the names of the twelve earthly branches and in the fact that the first Tai new year must have commenced in November or beginning December. It has been pointed out that there is a possibility that this feature derives from a pre-historic trait in the Chinese calendar, but this idea has been discarded in favour of one in which the new year was derived from a Southeast Asian calendar.

The wider overview of calendar systems includes several traces of such a calendar. The names of the first months in the Ancient Tai, the Muang and the Vietnamese appear closely related. Ancient Tai, Vietnamese and Khmer share the non-Chinese custom of numbering the months. Both Ancient Tai and Khmer seem to have known a New Year near end November and beginning December. The Karen derive their names from the Chinese twelve animals from a proto-Muong source. These individual items of information have been taken as evidence for a calendar system which may have been by some means transmitted Southeast Asia and which rapidly evolved mainly at the cultural areas of Annam and Tonkin, areas where the twelve-year animal calendar dominates the agricultural cycle and where a November/December New Year would start the agricultural cycle.

The wider overview did not provide any clues regarding the possible origin of the Ancient Tai series of ten names nor of the Ancient Tai five-day

week II  
is yet an open question. This is also true of Southeast Asia.

Entirely different is the situation in the Tai-speaking areas of South China. There the Tai people are still an important factor in society. Some would follow with some speculation on the basis of the present on Dong Si culture and that of the Tai.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of Volume I it was noted that the examination of the ritual language of the Tai people must not only be an academic exercise but also for a number of practical purposes. This remains in Volume II under the same remark. The methods which have been developed here may be applied without much modification to texts spoken by and ritual wherever people of common descent have been altered relatively recently. Though I do not expect that there will be many instances which are so clear cut as the one of the Tai. Until the present the detailed reconstruction of Ancient Tai culture has largely escaped the notice of researchers and the results form a considerable gap in the history of the region. Perhaps scholars and archaeologists may find this exercise of some help in that it isolates certain aspects of Tai culture which may have left no direct inscribed traces. Upon reading these studies they may decide to further investigate the puzzles unclarified, such as the origin of the series of ten names of the background of the word *takao*. Those who however, ought to be most interested in these volumes are the anthropologists and ethnographers. Hopefully they will be stimulated to produce accurate and detailed reports. Even in the apparently meaningless details the most important historical clues can be found. It is intended to continue the research regarding the reconstruction of Ancient Tai ritual and to start five amongst their crafts, namely, 1) the agricultural rituals and add in the near future yet a third volume to *The Tai of Assam*.

<sup>4</sup> Terwiel, "The Origin of the Tai Peoples Reconsidered"

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